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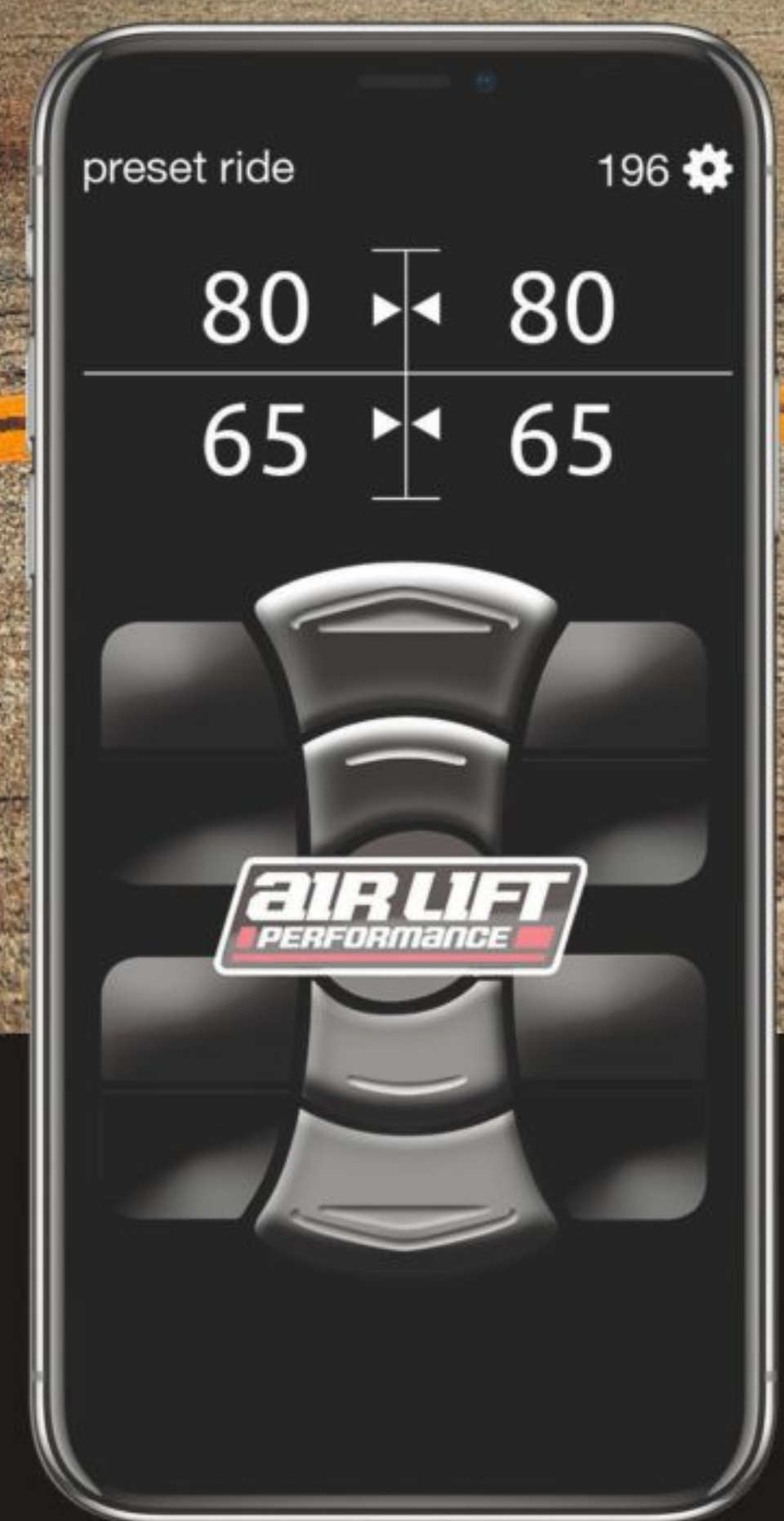
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SUBSCRIPTIONS

13 issues of Fast Car are published per annum
UK annual subscription price: £64.35
Europe annual subscription price: £78.00
USA annual subscription price: £78.00
Rest of World annual subscription price: £84.00

CONTACT US

UK subscription and back issue orderline: 01959 543 747
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Toll free USA subscription orderline: 1-888-777-0275
UK customer service team: 01959 543 747
Customer service email address: subs@kelsey.co.uk
Customer service and subscription postal address:
Fast Car Customer Service Team
Kelsey Publishing Ltd
Cudham Tithe Barn,
Berry's Hill, Cudham,
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United Kingdom

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William Gibbons & Sons Ltd

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ED START

Issue 406 April 2019

I know I don't look a day over 23 but I'm actually 37 years young. And have been involved in this beautiful scene for over two decades now, most of which has been spent working on this very magazine.

I've seen almost everything and watched modifying come full circle. When I started at FC back in 2002, it was all about Combat kits and Jap-styled Saxos. But by the end of the noughties that style had all but phased out – it was mocked, in fact. The scene had moved on, and the age of the cleaned look was upon us. And we're still very much advocates of that now.

One of the common gripes I hear about today's builds, though, is that they don't have the individuality or creativity of yesteryear, meaning they're not proper show cars. And although I can see the argument, I don't entirely agree. In my opinion, too many people fail to look past the wheels and air, and miss the finer details. Just because these details are subtle, doesn't mean they are any less work or less creative.

You also hear claims that back in the day every car at a show was heavily modified and today they aren't. Again, this is a complete misconception – I'd actually argue nothing has changed but the technology and hardware. Back then it was TSW Venoms and lowering springs. Today it's Rotiforms and air. And just like back then, the killer show cars are still very much present – they just aren't as crazy. Or at least, they weren't...

That's right. Big kits are back. They have been for a couple of years. And by the looks of this month's cover car, it seems like the Jap-styled Citroën is back, too. I told you we've come full circle. And what a glorious circle it is!

Big Love,
Slim Jules

Jules

Feature of the Month:

This is a tough one, because I absolutely love retro cars and we seem to be blessed with some absolute corkers in this issue: we have Driftworks' 964 Turbo, Liberty Walk's Wataru Kato's Fairlady Z, and a H22-powered gen 1 'Lude. It's not easy choosing between them, so I won't. Instead, I'll say my Feature of the Month is the Spark Plugs guide! Changing your plugs isn't rocket science, in fact, it's one of the easiest DIY Day Jobs there is. But there's still a correct way to do it, and we show you that way on page 61.



Next Issue on sale 29 • 3 • 2019



SLIM JULES
EDITOR

"Back in the early noughties I was rocking a VeilSide-kitted Supra and a terrible haircut!"



MIDGE
CONTRIBUTING
EDITOR

"I've still got my Turismo-kitted Fiesta. I wish I still had my hair and slender figure."



INITIAL G
ART EDITOR

"Back then I was having a mid-life crisis and had just taken delivery of an EP3."



GLEND
WEBSITE EDITOR

"In 2002 my size 16 feet had fully developed. My beard less so."

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Nissan Fairlady Z 042
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UP FRONT



SHELBY GT500 IS FORD'S MOST POWERFUL ROAD CAR EVER

If you like your cars to be completely terrifying and liable to rip your very soul to pieces, then good news, because the new Shelby GT500 Mustang is such a threat to your heart, bowels and general wellbeing, you'll need a certificate from your doctor to buy one. Probably.

It's billed as Ford's most powerful ever street-legal car in the company's history. Which is quite a claim when you consider the GT supercars and the long line of big-power muscle cars they've churned out over the years. But this looks to be brainy as well as brawny. The classic formula for a muscle car may have been to throw together a chassis out of scrap girders and then bolt a massive V8 into it, but the box-fresh Shelby GT500 is more intelligent. Indeed, we could even call it a game-changer for the genre.

Under the bonnet, you'll find that the source of that headline-grabbing power – all 700bhp+ of it – is a 5.2-litre V8 with a whacking great supercharger. This unit is a 2.65-litre Roots-type blower, which is inverted with an air-to-liquid intercooler tucked inside the valley of the V8, and the aluminium-alloy block features wire-arc cylinder liners to save weight. Along with forged conrods, high-flow aluminium heads, and a structural oilpan with innovative active baffles. All of that furious power runs through a Tremec 7-speed dual-clutch transmission which has a number of drive modes (normal, slippery, sport, drag, track, with line-lock and rpm-selectable launch

control). And there's a carbon fibre propshaft.

Muscle cars are all about figures, and here these really add up: we're talking 0-62mph in 3.5 seconds, and a standing quarter-mile comfortably under 11 seconds. You have to talk about dragstrip times with cars like this, it's just the nature of how they've evolved. But the GT500 is the empty-headed thug who smartened himself up, went to law school and got a diploma. So under those taut, rippling muscles you'll find that the revised suspension geometry works with lightweight springs and next-gen MagneRide dampers. The 6-pot Brembo brakes are the largest ever fitted to a production Ford, with 420mm 2-piece discs. And the choice of Michelin Pilot Sport 4S or Pilot Sport Cup 2 tyres feature unique compounds and tread.

Buyers also get a choice of upgrade packages. The Handling Package brings adjustable top mounts



The Carbon Fibre Track Pack includes 20-inch carbon wheels

and a spoiler with Gurney flap, while the Carbon Fibre Track Package adds 20-inch carbon wheels, a carbon GT4 rear wing and front splitter, and also deletes the rear seats. With a body extensively wind tunnel-tested for supreme airflow, downforce and cooling, the GT500 also boasts a fully loaded premium interior with optional race Recaros. So it's an obscenely powerful Mustang that handles like a European car and cossets you like an executive saloon. We want one.



BUGATTI DIVO UNNECESSARILY MAKES THE CHIRON QUICKER

Not one single person has ever driven a Bugatti Chiron and said, 'Hmm, it's OK. But it should probably be faster'. But such is the world of niche hypercars – every multi-millionaire playboy wants the car their multi-millionaire neighbour can't buy. So the Bugatti Divo exists. It shares the Chiron's bones, packing the mid-mounted 8.0-litre W16 with quad turbos to produce 1,479bhp, but features a redesigned exhaust system, massive fixed rear wing, oodles



of air intakes and downforce-inducing bodywork shenanigans, and weighs slightly less.

The weight loss is a bit of a joke. They've used gimmicks like carbon-fibre windscreen wipers and grooved wheel spokes to remove 35kg overall, although it's a drop in the ocean since the car still weighs nearly two tonnes. Still, it laps Nardò 8-seconds quicker than a Chiron. And it's slightly rarer – they're only making 40, all of which sold on the day it was announced. Looks pretty dramatic, doesn't it? We love it.



OCTAVIA vRS CHALLENGE IS THE SENSIBLE CAR YOU CAN TAKE ON TRACK

There have been a lot of hot Golfs in recent years. VW's latest treat to escape the factory gates at Wolfsburg is the Golf GTI TCR, a model dripping in carbon fibre that'll do 0-62mph in 5.6 seconds and 162mph. And the designers in the next office over are clearly a bit jealous, because there's a new version of the Skoda Octavia (which, of course, shares the Mk7 Golf platform) which has a real bee in its bonnet about performance: the Octavia vRS Challenge. This aggressive new model comes equipped with a lap timer, which speaks volumes about what Skoda are up to here. Would the Octavia be anyone's first choice as a track car? Possibly not, but the vRS Challenge has something to prove. It's got the minerals to back up the big talk as well – you get 245bhp from the 2.0-litre TSI motor, along with a sports exhaust, Alcantara seats with great big bolsters, Dynamic Chassis Control, a motorsport-derived VAQ limited-slip

diff, and a DSG 'box. And bizarrely, as well as selling it as a hatchback, you can also get a vRS Challenge estate – which should be good for raising eyebrows on the Nordschleife.



The Octavia vRS Challenge has a point to prove

Appreciating Depreciation **Chrysler 300C Hemi**

Then: **£29,000**
Now: **£7,000**



This is a car that doesn't really make sense in the UK. Although who ever had fun making sense? Life's too short for that. You've got to enjoy yourself. The 300C Hemi isn't actually all that brilliant, but it will definitely put a massive smile on your face every time you fire it up, thanks to the fact it's got an engine big enough to power a watermill.

Launched in 2005, this meaty four-door saloon is essentially a Lancia Thema with a bunch of Mercedes E-Class components thrown in, which isn't the best recipe. The overtly gangster styling of the 300C gave it a very tall beltline with narrow windows, which is supposed to make it look like a roof-chopped



custom. But it actually just means the visibility isn't great.

But the Hemi is the spec level that redeemed the model, making all of those things we just said seem completely unimportant. Because the Hemi engine is an American icon: 5.7-litres of V8 fury, rumbling away to give this menacing saloon an amusingly unnecessary 340bhp.

These cars cost £29k back in 2005, but you can pick up a decent one for £7k nowadays. Or if you can stretch to about £12-13k, you could treat yourself to the 300C Hemi SRT-8 – that one has a 6.1-litre motor with 425bhp. That's a lot of Detroit iron for your pounds and pence!



Top 5 mods: ▲
Magnaflow cat-back, Stillen induction, Air Lift suspension, ESP delete module, Whipple supercharger



WHAT'S ON MARCH 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Goodwood Breakfast Club: Estate Car Sunday - Goodwood Motor Circuit	4	5	6 Glenda's 40th Birthday (Hollywood Bowl)	7 Amelia Island Concours-Florida Geneva Motor Show - Geneva	8	9
10 Amelia Island Concours-Florida Ultimate Dubs - Telford International Arena	11	12	13	14	15	16 Buy Guinness
17 St. Patrick's Day Geneva Motor Show - Geneva	18	19	20 Cinema date with Midge	21	22	23 Volkswagen Show - Sandown Park The Big One Weekender - Crail Raceway
24 The Big One Weekender - Crail Raceway	25	26	27	28	29 Classic Car & Restoration Show - Birmingham NEC New Fast Car on sale! Whoop, whoop	30 Spring Action Day - Castle Combe
31 London Cartel: Retro Night - Ace Cafe Mimms Honda Day - Santa Pod						

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THE ANGRY MAN

If there's one thing that pisses me off more than anything else at this time of year, it's fog lights.

People don't seem to understand that the purpose of switching on your fog lights is to make you visible when it's foggy. Is rain the same as fog? No, it is not. Mist isn't fog. Snow isn't fog. Sleet? No, that's not fog either. Darkness isn't fog. That dense spray you get off the shitty surface on the bit of the M25 past Heathrow isn't fog. Fog is fog.

You know what I think it is? People are too happy to go 'Ooh, it's better to be safe than sorry,' and switch the bloody things on if the visibility dips even slightly, then leave them on all day. This is stupid. It's the same sort of lazy mentality that sees people hanging in the middle lane of the motorway for mile after endless mile, on the grounds that they might have to overtake someone at some point so they may as well stay there. These people are idiots.

Here's a thought for you, dickheads: how about if I'm following your fog lights on what is essentially a clear night, I switch my main beam on and give you the same treatment? Because that is exactly the same. Driving behind someone who's needlessly left their fog lights on is like having a pair of bored teenagers shining laser pointers in your eyes. There's no need. Learn what the switches in your car do and stop mucking about. Honestly.

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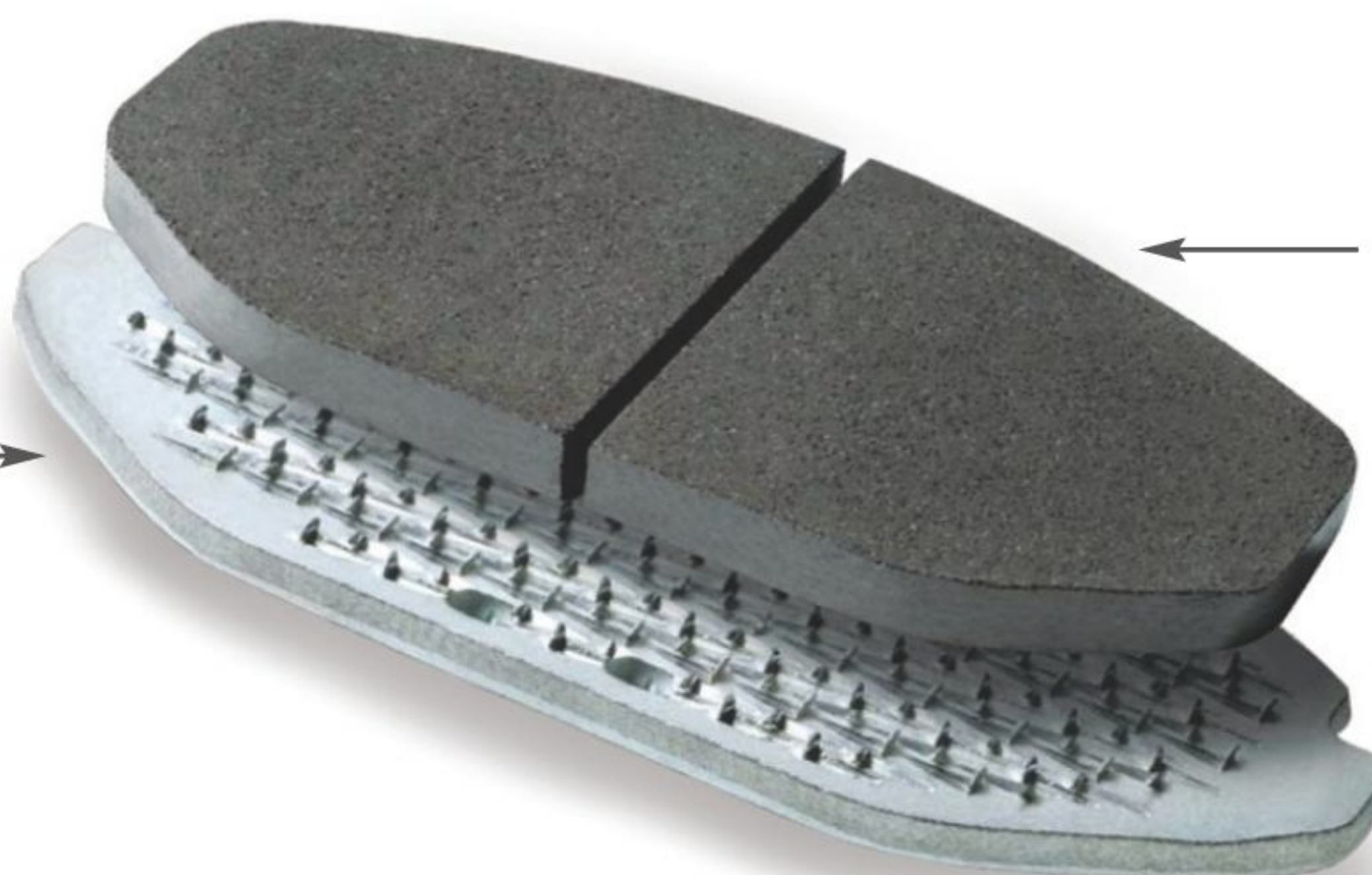


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COVER CAR

UNIQUE A



CITROËN DS3

ABILITIES



Words Sam Preston Photography SerialOne

By daring to be different when it came to his choice of hot hatch, Thanakhan Sajjasakunchai's been left with this savage, Garage Unique-tuned Citroën DS3 that you won't be forgetting in a hurry... ↘

COVER CAR



Four shotgun-style rear cans are framed by a carbon diffuser

There's a reason us humans commonly all buy exactly the same products as each other. In fact, it can often make perfect sense to do just that. Think about it – would you be able to share files as easily with your friends and family if you all owned different brands of smartphone?

Following the trends can clearly make life a lot more convenient at times, but on the flipside, convenience certainly never helped anyone to stand out from the crowd. It's something Thailand-based Thanakhan Sajjasakunchai here has refreshingly been thinking about an awful lot in recent years, especially when it came to his choice of car. By boldly thinking outside the box, he's now reaping the rewards more than anyone who follows the crowds could ever dream of...

"When it comes to small, hot hatchbacks, people always seem to choose between the same two or three cars," says Thanakhan. "You know the ones I mean... stuff like Fiesta STs and Polo GTIs." Perfectly content with the fact there was likely to be a reason for these machines being so popular right now, it didn't stop him from digging a little deeper into the list of potentials to see if there was anything with a little more character that would be a better base for his ambitious plans.

And it didn't take him long to uncover a seemingly overlooked gem: the Citroën DS3 Performance, which – in this face-lifted trim – offers up a surprisingly potent 210bhp from its boosted 1.6-litre motor. To top it all off, the car's quirky French styling was the ideal starting point for Thanakhan's big plans to switch things up a little when it came to daring aesthetic tweaks.



Three-piece Meister L1 splits in black-and-bronze, wrapped in Yokohama Advan A050 semi-slicks



“ Aggressive arch extensions have completely revolutionised the car ”



Re-worked bumpers, carbon fibre canards and lips, and that monstrously oversized rear wing...

HOT RIDE



FORGING PLANS

Spec'ing his very own DS3 with this bright yellow paintjob for maximum impact, it didn't take too long at all for the spanking-new car and its proud owner to swing by Garage Unique – one of Thailand's best-known car tuners, which has become famous worldwide for its incredible, top-notch wide-arch builds.

Speaking to the team at this Bang Khen-based outfit, plans were soon forged to begin work on transforming the car's bright body – something which had unsurprisingly never been performed before here. Garage Unique is perhaps best known for creating its very own custom body kits in-house to owners' exact specs; something which Thanakhan was keen to utilise with his DS3.

Clearly more than a little inspired by the killer JDM street styles that've hailed from the Land of the Rising Sun in recent decades, the detailed brief Thanakhan eventually settled on revolved around the mother of all body kits, which would help to signify the sportiness of this model in a much more direct way than Citroën first intended. Leaving the car with Garage Unique for a couple of weeks, it left our man to patiently await the results of this serious operation.

It soon became very clear that the talented team had once again smashed it as Thanakhan began receiving cryptic photos as the build progressed. And once the new parts were sprayed up in the correct hue, the results were better than anything anyone could've expected...

It's all based around those aggressive arch extensions that completely revolutionise the entire look of the car – complete with plenty of abrupt lines and air vents that now give the machine the look of a military fighter jet. The re-worked bumpers, meanwhile, complete with carbon fibre canards and lips only add to the drama. Elsewhere, that monstrously oversized rear wing mounted off the back of the roof is the perfect way to finish the work off.

Dropped on a bespoke K-Stance air suspension system, this left Thanakhan with the extremely tricky decision of what rims to slide underneath each extremely wide corner of his overhauled Citroën. And it didn't take all too long to find the answer...

"Garage Unique and myself both share a love for WORK wheels," he grins, revealing his love for the premium hoops from this much-loved Japanese brand. "I think my final choice is a perfect complement to the rest of the mods!"

And you know what? We think he's right. Coming in the form of three-piece Meister L1 splits, finished in the bang-on-trend black-and-bronze colourway, we can't actually think of any wheels which would suit the car any more than these beauties succeed in doing. Shod in super-sticky Yokohama rubber and finished off with the likes of multicoloured 326Power lug nuts, the car was fast taking the form of a show car fanatic's wet dream.

EXITS THIS WAY

With plenty of grunt on tap out of the box and with high insurance premiums threatening to cripple young Thanakhan's wallet, the only upgrade to that already potent motor under the bonnet is the crazy custom exhaust system whipped up by local outfit, Thokunart. With four huge shotgun-style exits framed by that tasty carbon diffuser, it's the perfect way to set off the rest of the angular bodywork (and allows the car to let off a much nicer growl in the process, too).

Inside, it's no surprise to learn that Thanakhan's headed right to the top once again to snap up a duo of sumptuous Bride reclining pews that are the perfect way to add a little more edge to the car's quirky cabin.

Catching sight of this bright yellow beast rolling down the road nowadays, Thanakhan's striking car serves as a much-needed reminder that, with a strong enough vision, it's always better to swim against the tide if you're looking to be different from the masses.

By adding some much-needed aggression to this under-the-radar hot hatch, he's created a machine that you're not likely to see anything remotely similar to for hundreds of miles around. Because after all, fitting in is seriously overrated. 🖤

OWNER PROFILE:

Name: Thanakhan Sajjasakunchai
Where are you from? Nakhonphatom, Thailand
Favourite mod? The Garage Unique bodykit
What's next? To use and enjoy the car



The car sits on a custom K-Stance air suspension system





TECH SPEC: CITROËN DS3 PERFORMANCE

STYLING

Factory Jaune Pegase Yellow paint; full Garage Unique 'GU Kits' wide-arch body kit (comprising carbon fibre front lip, vented wide front arches with carbon fibre canards, carbon fibre side skirt lips, wide rear arches, carbon fibre rear diffuser, vented bonnet and GT-style rear spoiler); Zunsport front grille; MC LED headlights and tail lights.

TUNING

1.6-litre 'Performance' four-cylinder engine; custom Thokunart exhaust system with quad slash-exit tips; factory automatic gearbox.

CHASSIS

8.5x18in (front) and 9.5x18in (rear) WORK Meister L1 three-piece split rims with black faces and bronze barrels; 25mm wheel spacers (all-round); 326Power 60mm lug nuts; 235/40/18 (front) and 255/40/18 (rear) Yokohama Advan A050 semi-slick tyres; K-Stance six-valve air suspension system; Subaru Impreza STI Brembo front brake system (with four-pot callipers and 350mm drilled and grooved discs).

INTERIOR

Bride Stradia Venus reclining bucket seats.

SHOUT

Garage Unique, Thailand; SerialOne Photographer.





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TOP 10 FIRST HOT HATCHES

TOP 10 FIRST HOT HATCHES

Hot hatches have got a bit out of hand these days, haven't they? The sort of performance the current crop of hyperactive hatchbacks can offer would put a lot of bona fide sports cars to shame. Look at the Mk3 Ford Focus RS, for example: that unhinged tearaway has 345bhp and a drift mode, for goodness' sake. The FK8 Honda Civic Type R will happily do 169mph, and it has a big 'R' button that makes everything inside glow an evil red. The Mercedes A45 AMG serves up an utterly bonkers 376bhp, and the whisperings in the industry are that its forthcoming replacement will have 400bhp+.

These are very silly numbers indeed, and it can easily make some newcomers to the hot-hatch genre feel a little overwhelmed. Sure, if you grew up driving fast hatchbacks then the culture is ingrained, but if you're new to all this then the supercar-chasing power levels are all a bit intimidating, aren't they? But fear not. We're here to hit the reset button for you.

After all, hot hatches have been around for generations, and the second-hand market is stuffed to the gills with decent, loved examples of these timeless hoon machines; classics of the genre that represent the true meaning of what a hot hatch should be. An everyday shopping car, which has been honed and refined, with a stiffer, more capable chassis, perhaps a bit of weight removed, and just slightly more power than may generally be considered necessary. Throw on some alloys and foglights and Bob's your uncle.

Think of the spirit of the 205 GTI or the Mk1 Golf GTI, but with modern refinements and without the silly collector price tags. Ladies and gentlemen, we bring you our Top 10 First Hot Hatches! If you're keen to get involved with this sort of caper but don't fancy getting a massive finance deal on a car that's going to terrify you, here's our pick of the affordable cars which prove you don't need a drift mode or a bunch of red lights to have a good time...

Vauxhall Corsa VXR

The key cornerstone of the Corsa's success has always been its affordability. While Vauxhall have always made sporting halo variants, the Corsa's cheap-as-chips base models are a major cash cow for the company. The aggressive pricing strategy helps a lot, as it means that the finance deals they offer can also be stretched to the hot hatch versions, and this is true of the slightly outrageous VXR. The version we're looking at here is the Corsa D, the one sold between 2007-14, and the spec was pretty decent from the off: while the styling upgrades were relatively modest (bigger wheels, weird-shaped door mirrors, more aggressive bumpers and a functional roof spoiler), under the skin was lower and stiffer suspension, tasty Recaros and a flat-bottomed steering wheel, as well as the option of AP brakes and a Remus exhaust. It may not be as mental as the fully-loaded Corsa E VXR that followed, but £3,500 buys you a tidy little Vaux with about 190bhp, which only has 1200kg-ish to shove down the road. Sounds like a classic hot hatch formula to us.

PRICE TODAY: £3,500

TOP 3 MODS: Dbilas manifold, Astra VXR K04 turbo, FMIC

INSURANCE QUOTE: £475 (excess £400)



Insurance Quote

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TOP 10 FIRST HOT HATCHES

Citroën Saxo VTS

This is another old-school French throwback, but we couldn't leave it out because it's such a legend. There was a time when you couldn't pick up a copy of Fast Car (or any of those lesser tuning mags that didn't survive the noughties...) without seeing a modded Saxo. The combination of low prices and attractive finance options meant the Saxo VTS – and the less-powerful 8-valve VTR – was everywhere. All you needed to do was throw on a huge induction kit, a set of lowering springs and some 17-inch TSWs and you'd be king or queen of the cruise.

Today? They're a bit thinner on the ground. A lot of them went the way of any hot hatch (ie. driven really hard until they either exploded or hit a tree). Many more went from fibreglass-clad show car to scrapyard crush fodder, while most of the remaining good ones were either turned into Stock Hatch racers or rally cars. But you can still find the Saxo VTS for reasonable money, and that's good – this is a car that taught a generation of modifiers about tuning, styling and cruising. We owe it to hot hatch posterity to keep at least a few of these bad boys on the road...



PRICE TODAY: £2,000

TOP 3 MODS: Piper exhaust, K&N induction, Konis

INSURANCE QUOTE: £395 (excess £350)



RenaultSport Clio 182 Cup

There have been loads of hot Clios over the years. The first generation is most fondly remembered for the Williams, but there was also the brilliant Clio 16v to enjoy. The Mk2 Clio saw the RenaultSport branding arrive on the iconic 172, a car which is universally loved for its outstanding chassis balance, but it's the later 182 we're recommending here.

Why? Because of the power hike. But also the choice of chassis options. The standard 182 was brilliant, but the 182 Cup had thicker anti-roll bars and stiffer, lower suspension along with dark graphite wheels, to show everyone you'd bought the more hardcore variant. The Cup was cheaper than the stock 182, thanks to all the stuff which was omitted (unlike Porsche, who'll charge you more for a stripped-out RS spec!). It lost the automatic Xenon headlights and headlight washer jets, climate control, rear footwell heater vents, illuminated sun visors, solar-reflective windscreen and automatic wipers; the carpet and headlining were downgraded to base-model spec, and it even had a smaller horn. The revvy 2.0-litre 16v engine was tuned for 182PS (that's 180bhp to you and me) and will happily relinquish more with a few well-chosen mods, and in stock form it'll do 0-62mph in 6.6-seconds. That's a lot of hardcore hot hatch thrills for the money!

PRICE TODAY: £3,500

TOP 3 MODS: GAZ Gold coilovers, ITG Maxogen induction, Quaife ATB LSD

INSURANCE QUOTE: £400 (excess £375)



TOP 10 FIRST HOT HATCHES

Ford Focus ST170

The first-gen Ford Focus was an absolute peach. It had to be, really. Lots of die-hard enthusiasts were quite cross about the idea of the iconic Escort name being killed off after so many years, so its replacement had to be a bit special. And it really was. The new styling was ultra-modern in 1998, and the handling was just amazing; given that it was intended to cover a whole range of spec and trims levels with the money-spinners being the cheaper everyday runabouts, they could have put any old budget chassis layout in there, but Ford went all-out with the clever Control Blade multi-link rear suspension. This means that even the lowliest Mk1 Focus will handle really well. And the sporty versions? They're just sublime.

One of the great unsung hot hatches of the early 2000s, it's incredible that the ST170 is still available for under £2,000. It's fair to say it didn't exactly dazzle the market when it was launched in 2002, as its 170bhp output had to contend with a variety of competitors approaching and passing the 200bhp barrier (and it transpired Ford had the Focus RS waiting in the wings, and didn't want to overshadow the new halo model by making the ST170 too good). But talking about this car in raw power terms does it a disservice – that



“One of the great unsung hot hatches of the early 2000s”



engine and that chassis work beautifully as a whole. The ST170-spec Zetec had a lot of development work put into it; branded a Duratec, it's actually a Zetec-R of the kind you'd find in a different state of tune in the Focus RS. Built on the base of the 130bhp-spec Zetec, it features a high-flow aluminium head with bigger valves and stiffer springs, higher lift cams, continuously variable intake valve timing, high-compression pistons and forged rods, dual-state intake with long runners for low-end torque and short ones for peak power... It all adds up to 170bhp. Hence the name.

You also get a really sweet 6-speed Getrag manual gearbox, 15-spoke 17-inch wheels and 300mm front brakes. You could get it in three-door or five-door form, or even as an estate. And its understated and classy styling really looks the part. A real driver's car and definitely a future classic.

PRICE TODAY: £2,000

TOP 3 MODS: Scorpion cat-back, K&N Typhoon induction, BC Racing coilovers

INSURANCE QUOTE: £430 (excess £350)





TOP 10 FIRST HOT HATCHES

MINI Cooper S (R53)

There's a world of difference between the MINI Cooper and the MINI Cooper S. They look similar to the untrained eye, but that little red 'S' badge on the first-gen MINI entailed more than just a twin centre-exit exhaust and a big intake nostril in the bonnet. It may have been harking back to the iconic Cooper S badge of the 1960s, but in the case of the 2000-06 model, the 'S' stood for 'supercharged'.

There's a lot to love about this frantic little car. BMW build quality and retro-futurist design means they're solid and quirky (albeit with slightly rattly dashboards), and that energetic 170bhp always feels urgent in such a light car. There was an LSD on the options list and this really transforms the way it puts the power down, and with a thriving scene around these cars, the aftermarket support is massive. Throw on a 17 percent reduction pulley and an uprated intercooler and you've got an easy 20bhp increase. Fit a Scorpion cat-back for a few pops and crackles, then upgrade the suspension and have some fun.

Proper little pocket rockets, these. Just remember to always, always switch the traction control off. Trust us.

PRICE TODAY: £3,500

TOP 3 MODS: Scorpion cat-back, Eibach coilovers, 17 percent pulley

INSURANCE QUOTE: £400
(excess £375)



Honda Civic Type R (FN2)

We agonised over which Type R to put into this list. The EP3 Civic is basically one of our favourite cars ever. While the original EK9 Civic and the DC2 Integra are both astonishing to drive too, although they're commanding collector money these days. So we reckon the FN2 Civic Type R sits happiest as a first hot hatch. It's got the same awesome K20A2 motor as the EP3, a nat-asp 2.0-litre VTEC with 197bhp that just revs and revs and revs, and it's all wrapped up inside a package that looks like a spaceship.

When this generation of Civic launched back in 2006, its looks were jaw-droppingly revolutionary, and it still has a lot of impact today. The interior's cool too, with its weird two-level dash thing. OK, some purists may argue that the FN2 doesn't handle as well as the EP3, thanks to its simpler rear suspension setup, but it's still a bloody entertaining steer with bags of potential. The Honda tuning scene is absolutely massive, and it's a piece of cake to tweak an FN2's chassis to turn it into a proper fast-road or track weapon. And if you like chasing big power, the K20 motor responds really well to supercharging...

PRICE TODAY: £4,000

TOP 3 MODS: Eibach Pro Kit springs and camber bolts, Tegiwa cat-back, ITG Maxogen induction

INSURANCE QUOTE: £455 (excess £350)





TOP 10 FIRST HOT HATCHES

“The special stuff was reserved for the Japanese: they got the Glanza”



Toyota Starlet Glanza V

In the 1970s, Toyota Starlets were rear-wheel drive. When the company saw fit to switch the third-gen to a simpler and cheaper FWD package in the mid-'80s, a lot of people saw this as a retrograde step. But these people were forced to eat their words when the fourth generation ushered in the slightly bonkers Starlet GT Turbo. This rabid model set a precedent for sporting FWD Starlets that really came to a head in 1996, when Toyota brought us this little marvel: the Glanza V.

The fifth-generation (P90) Starlet was a decent enough thing in its own right; it shared its platform with the Paseo coupé, and it was an honest and chuckable little runabout. In the UK we got a modest spread of spec levels – the base 1.3 Sportif, the slightly more upmarket CD, the sporty-ish SR, and the GLS, which had all the option boxes ticked. But naturally the special stuff was reserved for the Japanese market: they had the Glanza.

This is a rather appropriate name for the model. Starlet, of course, denotes a small star that shines brightly, and Glanza is derived from the German word 'glanz' which means 'brilliance' or 'sparkle'. The name alone suggests an effort to apply even more lustre to an already sparkling base, and the spec backs this up with a brilliant-cut glimmer. The Glanza S is an interesting curio, with its naturally aspirated 1.3-litre 4E-FE engine producing 84bhp. But the real jewel is the highly regarded Glanza V. This threw a turbo into the mix, the 4E-FTE creating a robust 138bhp.

Hot hatch enthusiasts who grew up in the nineties and noughties with a keenness for the Renault 5 GT Turbo will be well-versed in taking a small engine, turbocharging it, and throwing it into a lightweight shell for B-road thrills. The crucial difference here is, while the Renault 5 will inevitably break down at some point, the Glanza boasts faultless Japanese reliability.

There were also some interesting options: as well as the weird dual-boost settings (where you could switch between 115bhp low-boost or 138bhp high-boost, it's not obvious why), you could specify an LSD, Recaro seats, ABS, and a rear strut brace. These were all JDM cars so if you want to find one you'll be looking at an import – but there's quite a few of them in the UK now. Prices start around £3k, while £5,000 will get you a really nice one.

PRICE TODAY: £3,000

TOP 3 MODS: Japspeed front-mount intercooler, MeisterR coilovers, HKS Hi-Power exhaust

INSURANCE QUOTE: £550 (excess £500)





TOP 10 FIRST HOT HATCHES

Volkswagen Golf GTI (Mk5)

The VW Golf GTI has been a hot hatch hero for generations. The Mk1 was an icon. The Mk2 made the platform even better (particularly in 16v guise). The Mk3 was... a bit disappointing. The Mk4 was a mixed bag (the early 115bhp 2.0 was rubbish; the later 1.8T ones were better). But if you want a quality all-rounder today, you'll be wanting a Mk5 GTI. Made from 2003-08, it was a true return to form.

The handling is just magical, the 200bhp grunt from the 2.0-litre turbo motor is beautifully delivered, the interior's nicely screwed together with a mixture of useful toys and retro GTI embellishments, and of course it does the proper hatchback thing of being really practical. This car was a massive seller when new – for obvious reasons, it's brilliant and got rave reviews – which means the used market is flooded with them, so you can choose your ideal spec and find a well looked-after one. The amount of stanced and/or big-power Mk5s on the scene today demonstrate just what a popular platform this is for people like us, and with masses of available upgrades it's a blank canvas. The Golf GTI may be the default choice for many, but there's a reason for that. It's just great.

PRICE TODAY: £3,500

TOP 3 MODS: RamAir induction, Remus exhaust, Revo remap

INSURANCE QUOTE: £455 (excess £350)



RenaultSport Twingo 133

Another RenaultSport product here, and perhaps not one you'd expect us to be recommending. A Twingo, with 133bhp? Doesn't sound all that exciting, does it? But stick with it, as it's actually a good idea.

The second-gen Twingo was a quality little thing, based on the Clio II platform, and the launch of the RenaultSport 133 in 2008 brought a welcome shot in the arm to the junior hot hatch market. The Twingo 133 Cup enjoyed £700-worth of chassis upgrades that provided stiffer springs and dampers, a lower ride height, and 17-inch anthracite alloys with 195/40 tyres. It also boasted various weight-saving measures, including a single-piece rear bench instead of the independent-sliding rears, and with such fripperies as the air-conditioning, automatic wiper and headlamp operation being unceremoniously thrown in the bin, along with even the tint film on the rear windows. However, it was also possible to buy a 133 with the Cup pack, which was basically the full-fat car along with the wheels and suspension upgrade. Either way you get a perky chassis, eager performance, plenty of equipment, and a surprisingly rare car. When's the last time you saw a 133 at a car show? This puppy's got a lot of potential...

PRICE TODAY: £3,500

TOP 3 MODS: K-Tec manifold & exhaust, Cat Cams, BC Racing coilovers

INSURANCE QUOTE: £350 (excess £325)



Peugeot 306 GTI-6

A slightly more retro choice here, for the discerning fast-road hooligan. Peugeot have been synonymous with unrivalled hot hatch prowess right from the start; the 205 GTI is an all-time fave, although the values of those have started to go a bit nuts recently. The 106 GTI and Rallye are going the same way, but it's still possible to pick up a 306 GTI-6 for pin money if you know where to look (ie. owners club forums, Facebook groups and so on). And you really should, because it's a cracking little car.

The '6' in the name tells you it has a 6-speed gearbox, which isn't really an impressive boast nowadays but it was a headline-grabbing feature back in 1996. And the GTI-6 is about more than just a gearbox – its 2.0-litre 16v engine produces 167bhp with revvy enthusiasm, while the steering and suspension are scalpel-sharp. It only weighs 1,215kg, it has passive rear-steer, and the engine is mounted really far back. So what weight the 306 does have is in the right place to make it handle. And the best part is that you can still pick up a 306 GTI-6 for about 15 hundred quid – so you can feel smug as you overtake a 205 GTI, in the knowledge they paid five times more than you did. And they don't have air con.

PRICE TODAY: £1,500

TOP 3 MODS: Jenvey throttle-bodies, Cat Cams, Pug1Off remap

INSURANCE QUOTE: £435 (excess £375)

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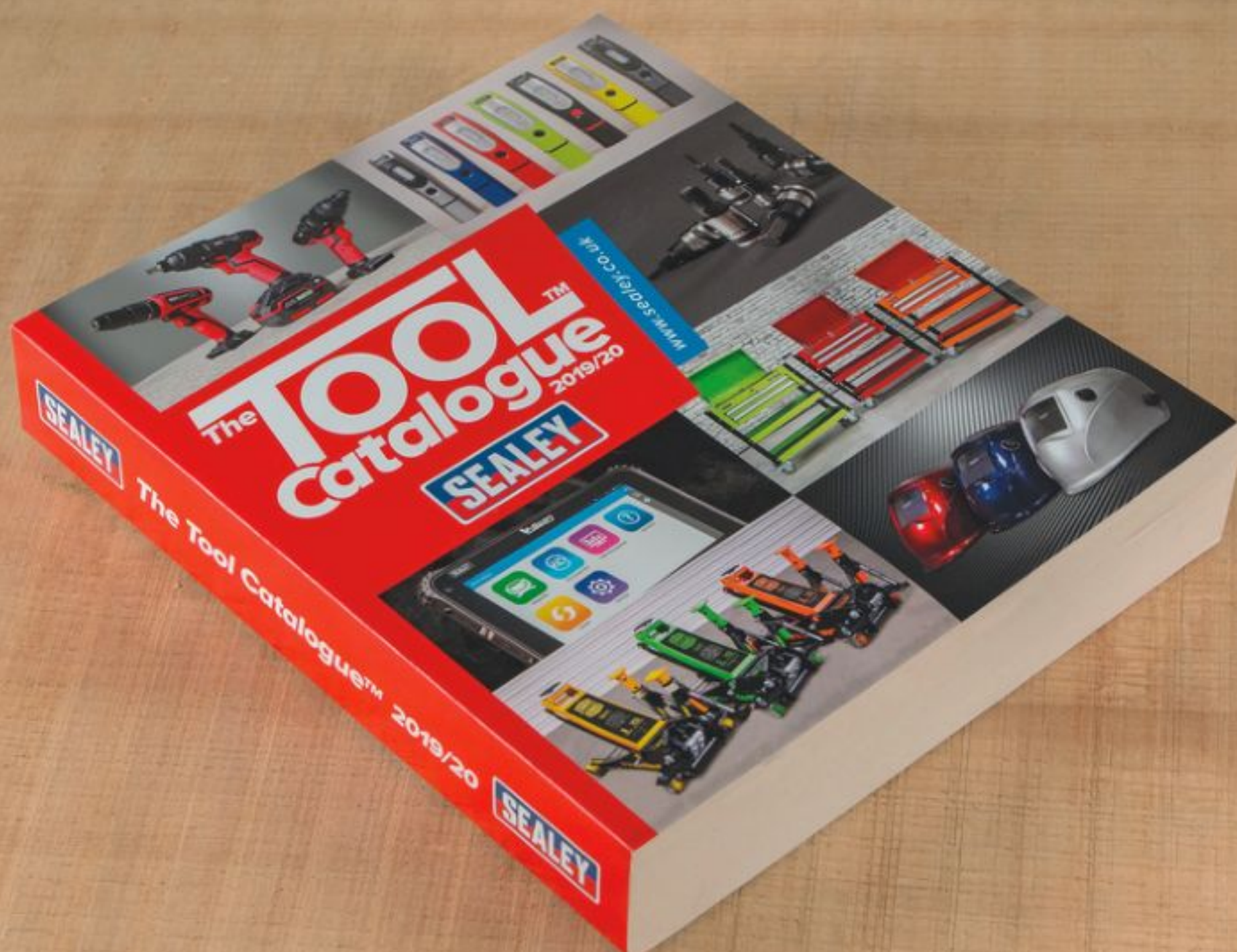
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Words & Photography **Davy Lewis**

Home-Built Hiro

With a beefy VR6 lump, a Westmorland front-end and a set of ultra-rare SSR Hiro rims, this Mk2 Golf is a fusion of US, Euro and Japanese car cultures

Unless you've spent the last few years living in a cave, you'll be well aware of the current craze for all things retro. This concept of looking back to 'the good old days' influences everything we do, from the trainers we wear, to the furniture in our homes. It's currently big business.

And car culture hasn't escaped the rose-tinted spectacles of nostalgia. 2018 was definitely the year of the retro ride, with more of these golden oldies tuned and modified by enthusiast owners than ever before.

Central to this phenomenon were shows like Players and Retro Rides Gathering. They not only embraced modern classics, they pulled down their pants and gave them a reach around too. (You been sniffing those Ambi Pure's again, Dav? – Jules).



HOT RIDE

➔ Here at FC we've featured some of the finest examples of old-school cool, from James Williams' Hillman Imp on air-ride, to Pipey McGraw's epic 'Japuar,' and retro goodness doesn't get much better (or indeed cooler) than Benny Smith's Mk2 Golf. Like a bratwurst with a topping of sushi, chugged down with a Budweiser, it's a daring fusion of US, Euro and Japanese – guaranteed to upset the OEM+ purists.

"I've had loads of cars over the years. Mk1 Golfs, Novas, R5 Turbos, a 309 GTi, an E30 BMW, a Supra, a Skyline, but never a Mk2 Golf," explains Benny. "My bro-in-law is into his dubs and suggested I get one, so that's where it all started."

Despite noble intentions to keep it simple with lows and wheels, the urge to modify this '80s Golf soon became too strong to resist. "The more I looked into new parts, the more ideas I had and it spiralled from there," smiles Benny. With his dad's garage available and a mate with a unit to stash car parts, it was only going to end one way.

"It's taken me seven years to get to this stage," says Benny proudly. "And I can honestly say not one company has worked on the car. It's all been built by myself and friends on the driveway and in the garage."

Designed for Hiro Engineering by Speed Star Racing in the 1980s, these are ultra-rare hoops



But there's more: "The VR6 engine was fitted under a gazebo and the two-tone paintjob was done in my mate's carpentry shop."

BEING A HIRO

What really sets this 30-year-old Golf apart from the rest is its unique fusion of car cultures. Clearly there's a Euro influence, but then there's the US-bits such as the Westmorland front end. Then, tucked up

tight in the arches, you'll find a set of ultra-rare SSR Hiro wheels in a 7x15in flavour.

If you're a bit of a wheel aficionado you'll already know that these beauties were designed for Hiro Engineering by SSR (Speed Star Racing) in the 1980s and could be found on some of the most exciting Jap cars of the time. Benny explains: "I was just browsing eBay for three-spokes a few years back and they came up. They were in a right state when I got them and I had to have them fully



The Mk2 sits on an Air Lift Performance suspension running V2 management

MK2 GOLF



The 2.8-litre VR6 engine was fitted under a gazebo. #lads



The Hella lights are more old school than Grange Hill





OWNER PROFILE:

Name: Benny Smith, 37

Job: Manager

First car? At 15-years I had a Mk1 Golf Driver

Lessons learned on the project?

No matter what your idea is, stick to it and see it through

What's next? Full retrim and ICE install with a proper boot build. Also pull the engine out and redo the bay

Benny is our Hiro



refurbed." He continues, "I didn't realise how rare they were until I looked into it. They're just missing the centre caps but they are proper rare. When they do come up, they cost hundreds!"

Having unintentionally hit eBay gold, hub adaptors were sourced and the Golf was soon sitting pretty on its rare 1980s hoops. Sweet. But don't go thinking this is just another average car on a set of rare rims. The rest of Benny's Mk2 is dripping with neat touches. Inside you'll find a half-cage and a pair of OMP bum-rests, complete with harnesses. There's a smattering of US-spec switches and a leather rear bench. The boot is home to a functional air-ride set-up.

This entire build, which has occupied Benny and his team of loyal helpers for seven years on and off has resulted in a truly unique car. "The car wouldn't have got to the stage it's at without the help of friends and family," says Benny. "There's Riceboy for doing the paint the night before a show, Tommy B and

the crew for fixing it on many occasions when it broke and my bro-in-law, Paul for working on the car when I was too hungover or still out partying to do it myself," laughs Benny.

One thing's for sure, modifying a retro ride is going to involve some pain – especially if you take on all of the work yourself and Benny has become acquainted with many of Britain's hard shoulders over the years.

KEEPING THE FAITH

"The biggest challenge with the car was keeping the faith to see it through to the end. It literally went through a stage where every time I took it out, it broke down," he laughs. It gets worse: "One time, the engine actually fell out from running it too low, ripping the front cradle off."

Fortunately, the lads came to the rescue with a piece of wood across the wings and ratchet straps to hold the engine up so they could drive it home. "It was well dodgy as



Upswept tailpipe FTW



OMP seats, harnesses and flat-bottom steering wheel

“The engine actually fell out from running it too low, ripping the front cradle off”



HOT RIDE

every time we went over a bump it tripped all the electrics off. Then there was the time an airline split on the way to a Vagmen show and my mate came and helped me change it on the side of the motorway. That was fun, ripping the seats out with lorries hammering past us. But somehow we made it to the show."

It's clear Benny has suffered more than his fair share of dramas with his Golf, but he doesn't regret it one bit and you know why? It's because he's created something truly unique – and for himself.

"I love all the parts together which make the car. It's about having a vision that it would work and not look a mess. Purists and the OEM crowd hate it, but I'm a strong believer in following your own ideas and building the car that you want, not the car that you think will make you famous." Wise words indeed, sir.

So what lies ahead for this stunning VR6'd Golf? "I'm planning a full interior re-trim, a proper boot build and looking to re-do the engine bay," says Benny. "Then maybe I'll supercharge it or start another project."

Whatever he decides, you can be sure that it will have Benny's innovative and creative stamp on it – we look forward to seeing his next home-built Hiro. ■



TECH SPEC: Golf Mk2

Styling

RSS Designs '90s fibre glass vented bonnet; Westmorland front-end; eyebrow spoiler; side indicator delete; carbon F1-style mirrors; smoothed C-pillar swage lines; late-spec big bumpers; Hella green rear lights; Happich pop-out rear windows; side rub-strip delete; clear front indicators; custom two-tone paint; rear wiper and spoiler removed.

Tuning

2.8-litre Golf VR6 engine; lightened and balanced flywheel; 6-branch racing manifold; CDA carbon induction kit; custom straight-through exhaust with middle box removed and upswept tailpipe; VR6 transmission.

Chassis

G60 brakes; Air Lift Performance V2 air suspension system; 2-piece SR Hiro 111 7x15in wheels with 165/45 Nankang tyres; H&R hub adapters.

Interior

OMP seats and harnesses; OMP flat-bottom steering wheel; air-ride install in the boot; half cage; leather rear bench; US-spec heater control panel and various US switches.

Thanks

Paul Stokes from Shine and Revive Automotive Detailing (07931 486218); Tommy B, head of pit crew, and all the other lads; Rice Boy for the paint; Scuff Off Body Repairs (07890 138770); all the Vagmen for sorting me out in times of need; and Dubclub lads for always having faith in the car.

A custom straight-through
exhaust makes the VR6 sing





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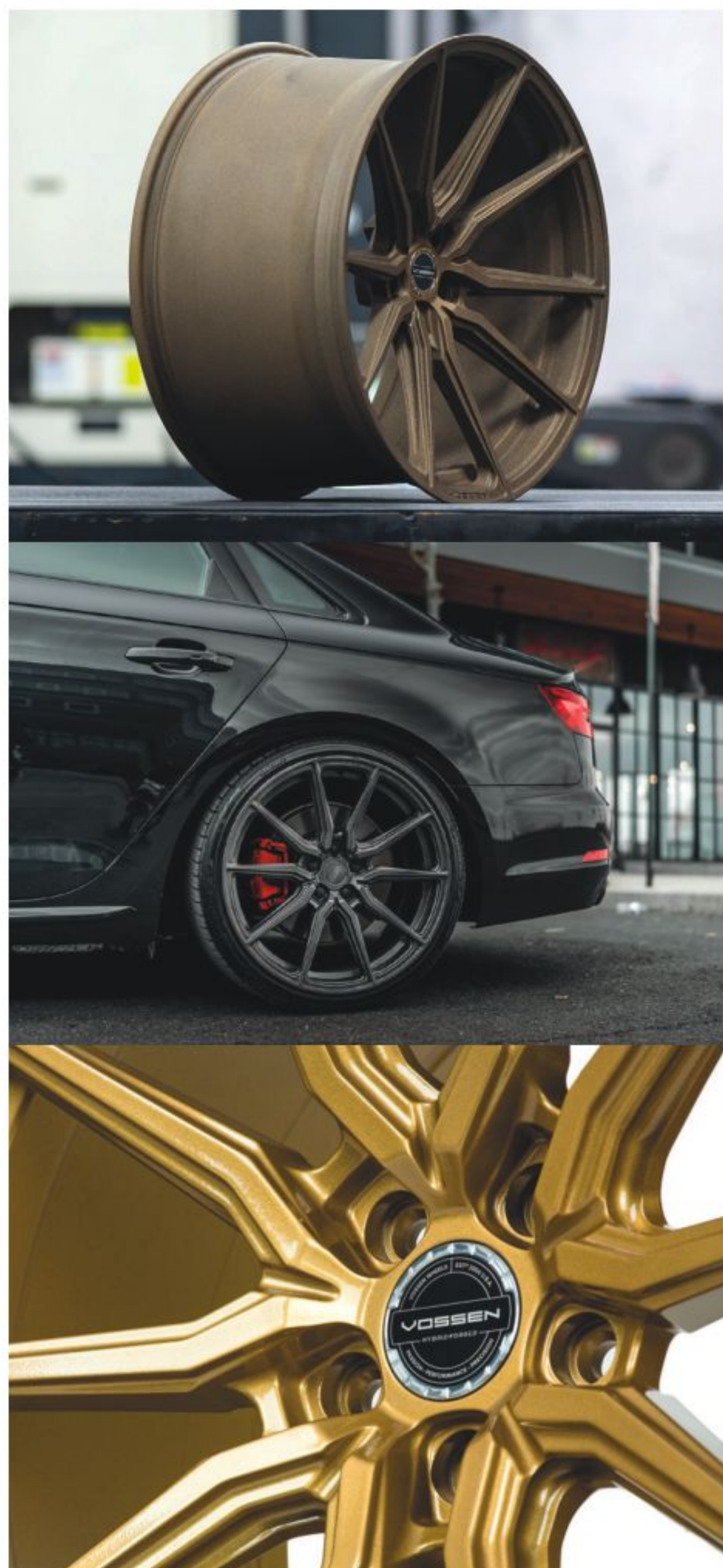


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PCDS: 5x112, 5x114.3, 5x120, Blanks

OFFSET RANGE: ET-5-ET64

FINISHES: Gloss Graphite and Double Tinted Gloss Black (standard finishes), Gloss Satin and Matt Black, Anthracite, Satin and Gloss Silver, Satin and Textured Bronze, Gloss Gold (custom colours)



FRESH KIT

VOSSEN HF-3, From £440 (each)

Jaw-dropping single and three-piece hoops have been coming thick and fast from the Miami maestros over the past six months. But, unlike all the fully-forged whoppers you see at SEMA and the like – the sort of puppies you'll probably have to remortgage your nan's false teeth to stand a chance of owning – Vossen actually produce a whole load of more wallet-friendly offerings too.

Of course, there's affordable, and there's affordable. These particular high-end hoops can hardly be called cheap, but there's no question that the Vossen Hybrid Forged Series (their version of lightweight flow formed rims), has proved extremely popular on both sides of the Atlantic since they launched the concept a year or so ago.

Anyway, their newest addition to the nine-design strong range, the HF-3 here, is new for 2019 and we can't help feeling they've been almost too clever with this one.

The face design is a Vossen classic for starters. With just a few subtle tweaks, this multi-layered 10-spoke has been lifted from

their famous M-X2 monoblock. In fact, it's virtually identical, apart from the centre cap and being a quarter of the price.

By making this one available off-the-shelf though, instead of custom machining each fully forged M-X2 in-house for each car. And by using their Hybrid Forging process rather than conventional forging, they've managed to create a cracking hoop that just about keeps the credit card damage to a minimum.

They're big ol' wheels of course, ranging from 19 inchers right up to mental 10x24s. But they're available in a huge selection of finishes and offsets, plenty of core PCDs and even the option of 'blanks', which can be custom drilled to any 5-stud PCD.

What's more there's also a range of concave profiles (flat, mid, deep and super-deep), and with 32 billet centre cap options to choose from, it's unlikely you'll see the same set anywhere else on the streets. Circular epicness in every way possible.

www.vossenwheels.com

www.prestigewheelcentre.co.uk

FRESH KIT

NEW PRODUCTS

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MISHIMOTO CIVIC EXPANSION TANK, £222

What we like most about this fully-welded coolant tank for the FK8 Civic Type-R isn't so much that it's clever – chiefly because it incorporates an internal baffle to keep coolant near the overflow port when absolutely gunning it (not that there's another way to drive the Type R of course). It's not the fact it includes an uprated 1.3-bar filler cap and has a proper sight glass for level-checking either. Nope, it's more that this one looks so damn hardcore in both the Rallye Red or micro-wrinkle black finishes, that it's hard not to start banging on about how performance isn't about polishing and that form should always follow function. Besides, on some absolute screamers, you just don't need all that shiny stuff, right? No messing.

www.mishimoto.co.uk



ITG FIESTA ST INTAKE SYSTEM, £234

Fiesta ST Mk7 prices are dropping quicker than a Vegas hooker's underclangers (lovely – Initial G). So you can pick up one for an absolute steal, but you'll also be able to add one of the sexiest looking intake kits out there, too.

Due to ITG's vast experience in F1, BTCC and the WRC, they know a thing or two about maximising airflow with their special Tri-Foam filters. Plus this item will do the job without compromising on filtration ability, performance gains or pinging any of those EML lights. This uber-quality, direct-fit kit will not only bag you around 15 horses, without any other mods, but it'll look the part under your bonnet too. Bonza!

www.itgairfilters.com



FOCAL F-56, £125 (EACH)

This all-business, street tuner-inspired design, is a sweet budget hoop for those who hanker after something a little different on their ride... not to mention an absolute bargain! All-new for 2019, these cast multispokers are made by US firm Focal, but luckily for us, the fitments aren't limited to their home-grown Yank tanks. They make plenty specifically for Euro cruisers from the VAG and Vauxhall stables,

along with the odd Jap and French motor too. Better still they're little-known over here, so your mate next door is unlikely to be rolling on a set!

We get plenty of badass forged hoops from the US of course, but it's nice to see some wallet-friendly offerings coming through to us in the 51st State too. Top work Cali dudes!

www.ultrawheel.com

- **Sizes:** 7x16, 8x17, 8x18
- **PCD:** 4x100, 5x100, 5x115
- **Offset:** 40-42
- **Finishes:** Satin Black/Satin Clear Coat, Gloss Black Diamond Cut Face

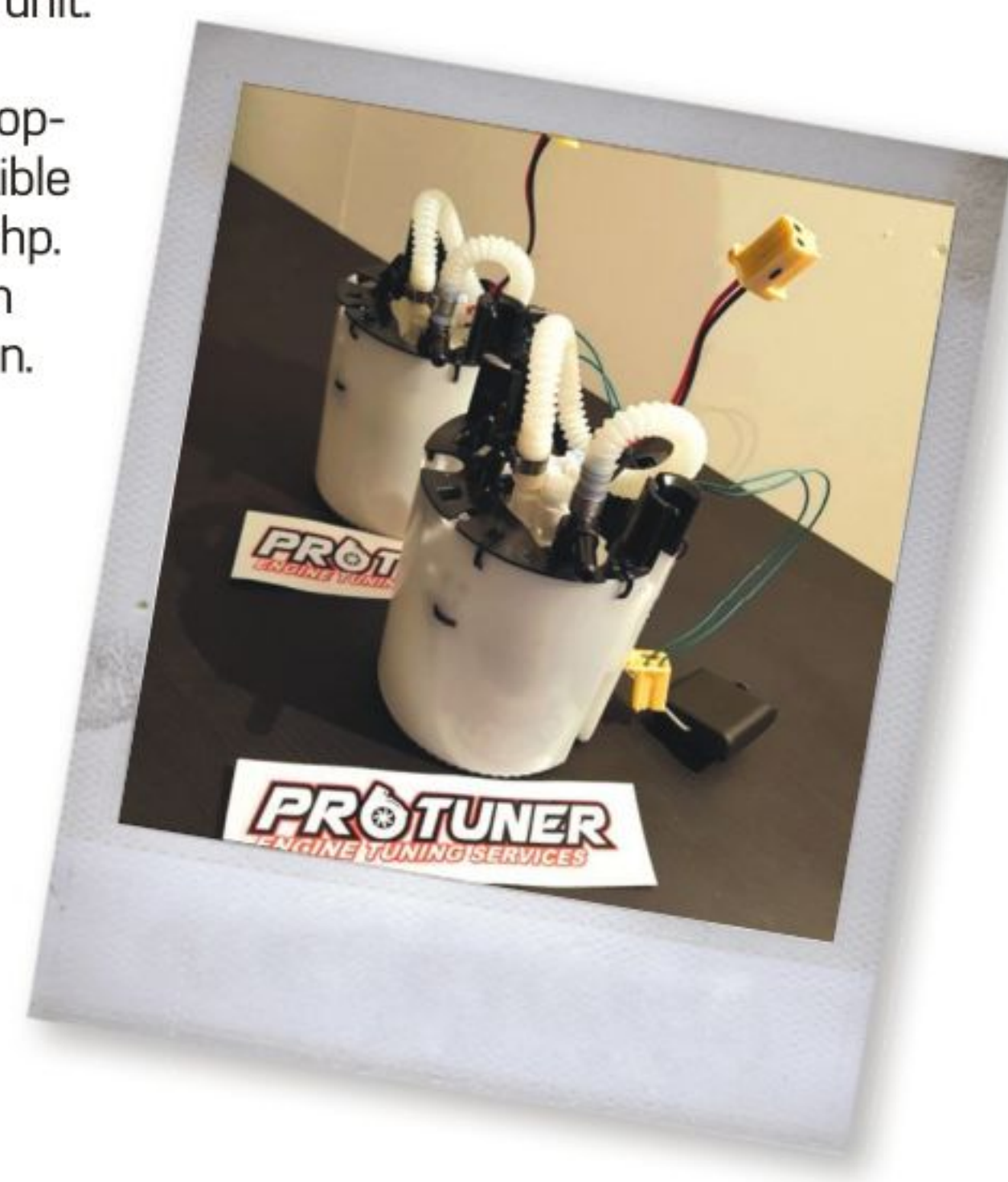


PROTUNER BMW FUEL PUMP, £300

Designed specifically to avoid fuel surge, which is handy if you're partial to getting your arse out on the regular, this LPFP upgrade for N54/55-equipped Beemers will literally double the flow of your standard unit.

Fitted with a stonking Walbro 450 pump, this drop-in unit is also e85 compatible and will support over 550hp. A stonking, not to mention super-easy, tuning solution. Nice one.

www.protuner.co.uk



Top Detailing Delights...

AUTOGLYM POLAR SERIES, FROM £15

Autoglym didn't tell us exactly why they call this their Polar Series (er, because it's like snow foam you tool – Jules), but there's no denying this new range of home-grown products is 'effin cool!

Come to think of it, this collection is less of a range in the traditional sense, and more of a full-on three-stage exterior cleaning system. All these products are designed to be applied directly by your pressure washer too, meaning you hardly have to touch the car at all along the way.

Polar Blast is a pH neutral pre-wash, a thick, creamy snow foam designed to effortlessly dissolve and lift off and caked-on muck. Step two is the Polar Wash, a non-stripping, LSP-friendly shampoo that you simply spray on, give a quick wipe over with your mitt, and rinse off for instant gloss.

And the last step, Polar Seal, is a hydrophobic coating offering supreme paint protection and a deep glossy shine.

If you're a pressure washer fan, we think you'll find it doesn't get any easier than that, right? The best of British and no mistake.

www.autoglym.com



CHIPEX STAIN & ODOUR BUSTER, £13

There's no doubt that the potion wizards at Chipex have cooked up some of the most chemically advanced detailing products over the past year or so, and that's the same with this new Stain & Odour Buster. Once again, they've come up with about the most cutting-edge product in its class – in this case the world of upholstery and carpet cleaners.

These guys are properly into the nerdy stuff, to the point that they tell us there's all sorts of specially developed gear in this: 1,2-benzisothiazol-3(2H)-one and 5-chloro-2-methyl-4-isothiazolin-3-one are two that they seem particularly proud of. Which is clearly wonderful.

But the point is, it all adds up to a whole load of special microbes that actively digest stains, converting them to harmless carbon dioxide and water. Like a catalytic converter for your carpets. Or something.

Still, you don't have to understand it quite as well as us, ahem, FC scientists. Just rest assured it'll eat through chocolate, vomit, MacDonald's BBQ sauce and dog droppings like a fother mucker. Although, they could have just said that in the first place.

www.chipex.co.uk



SEALEY 12V CORDLESS POLISHER, £90

Here's one for the detailing maestro that has everything: a product that's absolutely ideal for spot polishing or detail sanding when a more conventional DA or rotary polisher is just too big to do the job.

Packing a weenie 71mm pad (with both foam and wool pads included in the kit), it also comes with two heavy-duty Li-ion batteries to keep you going for hours of manly power tool-buffing fun. In fact, we reckon you just can't go wrong with this lightweight, dual-speed 12v puppy. Well, not unless you get carried away and mix it up with your hammer drill or impact wrench. (Please don't do that btw!)

www.sealey.co.uk



MEGUIAR'S HYBRID CERAMIC WAX, £20

You don't have to be some sort of hardened cleaning expert to appreciate a top product like this. In fact, this rather clever bottle of Meguiar's goodness is arguably even better for those who aren't particularly into hours of detailing at all.

The idea is that Hybrid Ceramic Wax waxes your motor as you rinse it off. So it's just a case of spraying it on, rinsing it off and... well, that's about your lot! There's no buffing, no curing time and no mess.

Using advanced SiO2 technology, it also adds a hardcore layer of protection offering durability and water beading that far surpasses a conventional wax. Being consummate professionals in the art of laziness ourselves, it's hard to argue with that concept.

www.meguiars.co.uk



LIFESTYLE



Rado HyperChrome Chronograph, £4,190

Limited to 999 pieces, this exclusive timepiece is set to be an all time classic. According to their press site, "The sporty-chic HyperChrome Chronograph is Rado's signature all-day, every-occasion timepiece for gents". And who are we to argue? We'd like one. But we can't afford one.

www.rado.com



Porsche Design XL EXtralight Trainer, €295

Have you just bought a new 911 and need a new pair of driving shoes? No, probably not. But these new kicks from Stuttgart would have been perfect. Still, you don't need a Porsche to buy them, but you do need 250-ish quid, which is quite a lot for a pair of trainers – but they probably make you run faster, right?

www.porsche-design.com



LIFESTYLE

The car culture experience doesn't just belong in the garage



SlammedUK WorldWide Jumper, £30

We've nearly made it people! We are just weeks away from winter being a distant memory. But don't go thinking it's time to break out the t-shirt and shorts just yet, especially as spring isn't exactly tropical in the UK! So we'd highly recommend you pick up one of these new WorldWide tops from SlammedUK that will be officially launched at Ultimate Dubs – which might have passed by the time you've read this, but no fear, just hit the link below and order yours online.

www.slammeduk.co.uk

Liberty Walk Gym Bag, £10

Now we're in March, it's safe to return to the gym because New Year's Resolution Gang have got bored and left, meaning the weight area is free again. To celebrate, why not treat yourself to one of these new bags from our favourite Japanese styling house! At a tenner, they're a bargain, too.

www.libertywalk-eu.com



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www.gmctools.com

This month it's time for some essential man tools

There are car tools and then there are proper man tools, the ones that no matter your skills as a modifier, DIYer or bloke in general, we all have to own. It's all laid out right there in the book of man rules don'tcha know?

Anyway, socket sets and spanners are car tools (unless you're a scaffolder - Jules), but a man tool is something that transcends the working on your motor bit, it's more of a life essential for everything, an object of your own manliness, something that screams "this guy, he knows how to take care of business." Now obviously, a chewed-up pencil to balance carefully behind your ear is number one on the list. But this is closely followed by a decent cordless drill and, if you're feeling particularly like THE man, a proper impact driver.

Well, here's a new kit from the Global Machinery Company where you can bag the lot without breaking the bank. Er, although you will need to bring your own pencil...



THE PRODUCT

Seeing any cordless item with '18V' plastered on the battery is always a good start, it shows they're not messing about. Clearly both of these GMC items have plenty of grunt behind them, which is quickly confirmed in testing.

That said, these have an even better start, crack open the box and you'll find them strapped into their very own high-quality tool bag, one that looks like it's a fair few quid's worth on its own. Suffice to say that's pretty unusual for the price.

Preaching the virtues of owning a decent drill and impact driver isn't important here, you'll already know 'em, just rest assured that these do everything they're supposed to, and do it very well. In fact, spend an extra couple of quid on some socket adaptors, and you've got yourself a plenty-powerful 120Nm impact wrench too. Perfect versatility for us car nuts.

Both units come with their own lightweight (but durable), long-lasting 1.5Ah Li-Ion batteries, which is always a huge bonus over having to share. These little power plants are also upgradeable, with plenty of 2, 3 and 4Ah options available. Not that we can see them being needed for anyone but professionals who need their kit in constant use though. The included intelligent fast charger only takes an hour to fully juice them up anyway. Oh yeah, did I mention you get two of 'em?

Anyway, all this for £175 shows some supreme value, and even more so when you shop around. With some dealers you can quickly knock a score or more off of that price... and it was something of a steal to start off with!



THE VERDICT

These are very much the perfect example of what the Global Machinery Company have done best over the past 20-years or so. The Australian firm don't go launching hundreds of drills and impact drivers every 5-minutes, they simply concentrate on making a very select few trade items as tough and as well-priced as possible. That certainly shows with this kit.

Both items have all-metal gears and are constructed with tough, impact-resistant materials, so they're damn solid and longevity under heavy use won't pose a problem. But,

"They look far cooler than many at this price"

as ever, it's the small touches that make a whole load of difference. Yes, essentially this is just a combi drill/impact driver twin pack, but both are well designed with trade use in mind, and incorporate handy features like built-in LED lights and vibration-reducing grips. In fact, I'd go so far as to say that they even look cooler

than most of the items at this sort of price point too.

I also love the other features like the charge indicators built into the batteries and the fact that the battery charger doesn't look like the flimsy piece of tat you get with many affordable tools. It's always kind of ironic when you get a tough-looking power tool with a rubbish charger. Ironic and properly annoying.

Occasional, everyday or trade use, for the money, I don't think you can go wrong with these.

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Walking the

Newcomers to the brand might think Liberty Walk is all about widebody Lamborghinis and purist-baiting McLarens. But Kato-san's own Fairlady Z shows just how much heritage and passion there is behind all this...

Words **Dan Bevis** Photography **Daniel Pullen**

Our favourite cars are the ones that raise a few questions, that get people scratching their heads and desiring further information. Consider the nature of Liberty Walk, for example: here's a company which has drawn a line in the sand for modern modifying, pushing the limits of what's possible with aesthetic upgrades for performance cars.

Take a look at their website and you'll see their latest widebody offerings for the likes of the Lamborghini Aventador, Nissan GT-R, Toyota GT86, BMW i8, Ferrari 458... fast modern cars amped up to brutal extremes. So why has the European show scene recently been abuzz with a 1970s Datsun – one sporting Liberty Walk logos, but without a brutal Liberty Walk overfender kit?

The answer is that the machine you're looking at here is as much a symbol as it is a car. It belongs to the company's effervescent founder, Wataru Kato. It encapsulates everything he loves about car culture and what his world-renowned brand sets out to achieve; namely, dropping jaws and broadening horizons.



SSR Jilba Racing wheels



Kato-san is obsessed with details and the way a car sounds is one of them...

Walk



HOT RIDE

The block has been bored and stroked to over 3.0 litres, with high-comp pistons, conrods and a KEW crank

S30S: BIGGER IS BETTER

Datsun released the 280Z to the US market in 1975. Sports car manufacturers were playing catch-up with government legislation at this stage, desperately trying to keep their cars feeling sporty while faced with increasingly stringent emissions requirements. The logical answer? Keep putting bigger engines in; the 240Z became the 260Z, which then received a 2.8-litre L-Series motor to become the 280Z. And in the case of Kato-san's car, that L28's been bored and stroked to over 3.0-litres – because more is more, right?

NOTHING IS TABOO

Kato-san is an irrepressible innovator. He's the kind of man who'll buy a Ferrari F40, then buy another one so he can modify it. Nothing is taboo in the world of Liberty Walk – if it's cool, it's cool, and no car is untouchable because they're just things after all.

This unerring and ineffable passion is fed by the performance cars and racers of the 1970s, the cars that first sparked his passion for modding and tuning. The Datsun S30 is the ideal canvas for this sort of treatment too. Sold as the Fairlady Z in Japan and the 240Z elsewhere (then the 260/280Z when larger engines were added), it's essentially the Japanese E-Type, with race heritage in spades, an integral thread in the tapestry of Japan's automotive heritage.

The initial inspiration here stems from the Fairlady ZG. This was a domestic model released in 1971 to homologate the car for Group 4 racing. It had a longer fibreglass nose cone, the so-called 'G-nose', along with wider Works bolt-on arches and a rear spoiler. It's the ZG look that Kato-san has ingeniously reworked here, and you may already be aware of this car's earlier two-tone grey guise, images of which flooded the internet seven or eight years ago. It was smooth, lean, taut and

Triple Solex twin-choke carbs push the motor to rev to over 8,000rpm

“The machine you’re looking at here is as much a symbol as it is a car”



The width, the footprint, the rage,
the careful eye for proportion...
It's badass retro

muscular, looking like a cross between a US custom and something from a Manga cartoon. It sat static over SSR Jilba Racing wheels, and reframed what a lot of people thought about the concept of modifying classic cars.

Fast-forward a few years, however, and Kato-san fancied a change. He's an innovator and never happy to rest on his laurels. It's important to keep pushing forward. As the Liberty Walk brand grew, so did his personal car collection, and this shakotan Fairlady, the jewel in the crown, was ripe for a makeover. Something that would make a lateral move from down-the-line shakotan to a fusion of Works/kyusha sensibilities and the kaido racer style – niche touchpoints within the Japanese retro modifying scene, blending into the old-school road-and-race look you see here.

The panscraping static stance was swapped for a custom air-ride setup simply because the Fairlady was destined for a world tour and it wouldn't get in the container on those wound-down coils. The multi-spoke alloys were replaced by a set of hallucinogenically broad steel wheels with super-aggressive offsets, packing out those widened bolt-ons with nanometric precision. (The

rear tyres are particularly noteworthy – it's notoriously tricky to find fat race tyres for 14-inch-diameter wheels, so Liberty Walk now produce their own in 245/525-14 sizes). The overall profile of the car is slippery and bullet-like, that G-nose at the business end complemented by an AIRONE tailgate at the other. This one piece makes an extraordinary difference to the silhouette, changing the big slanted rear window into a flat deck with flying buttresses. Every inch of the car positively bristles with track-ready aggression. So the ethos of this car might be making a little more sense to you now. Liberty Walk's modern cars seek to emulate the vibe of this badass retro; the width, the footprint, the rage, the careful eye for proportion. It's a masterpiece.

AESTHETIC FLOURISH

The final aesthetic flourish in the makeover, after converting the custom smoothed rear panel from twin-to single-taillights, was to rework it in a fresh new livery. In the true spirit of the kaido racer, Kato-san opted to formulate a sympathetic evolution of the livery used



“In life there are mountains to climb up and the bottom of the valleys to fall down, yet laughter in between. And today as everyday I just walk on my way as I like (freely)”



OWNER PROFILE:

Name: Wataru Kato

Age: 52

Occupation: Founder,

Liberty Walk

What's the Liberty Walk ethos? To create high-end cars where likes and dislikes are clearly divided!

on the classic Prince R380 race cars: slippery coupes on Brabham chassis with Skyline engines, with sloping noses and rear buttresses that are neatly echoed in Kato-san's Datsun vision. This is masterfully blended with the stripes from Kunimitsu Takahashi's KPGC10 Skyline GT-R race car – just one of an endless stream of references for the classic Japanese race aficionado to drink in with a knowing nod.

The interior is a real treat for fans of classic race cars, with a pair of gloriously vintage PRE bucket seats stretching subtly crinkled leather around those eyelets that evoke the Ford GT40 or Lamborghini Miura, with bright yellow shells to contrast with the red rollcage. The Fairlady has one of the all-time classic dashboards, its curves making it look as if the gauges are bursting through from within, and Kato-san's augmented this with a whacking great Pro-Comp rev counter. Why? Because his L28 engine is no ordinary L28 engine...

It's very much the Liberty Walk way to fuse eye-catching looks with devastating performance and this wouldn't be much of a kaido racer without a bit of race-car power. So the 2.8-litre straight-six was handed over to Garage Okazaki to rebuild it as something a bit more frantic and urgent. Their endeavours included putting in a lot of head work before boring and stroking the block to a smidge over 3.0-litres, with high-comp pistons, conrods and crank from KEW along with their own proprietary cams. The result, as the hungry motor slurps through its triple Solex twin-choke carbs, is a motor that revs to over 8,000rpm and makes a noise

like Satan's dog gargling with wasps, spitting its spent gases through those upswept twins with a rasp.

DETAIL OBSESSED

Kato-san is a connoisseur and an expert on the roots of tuning culture; this isn't just a job, it's a lifestyle. He's also a flamboyant character who'll never settle for half-measures and loves to put on a show – that's why he insists on infiltrating mainstream car shows and sneaking in the latest LBW-kitted McLaren, then parking his wideboy RX-3 outside and revving the nuts off its rotary just to scare people. He's obsessed with the details, and the way a car sounds is integral to the plan; indeed, with the Fairlady Z, this takes on a classic twist in the form of its audio system... peer inside and you'll see a period Pioneer stereo with separate graphic equaliser, and shelf-mount TS-X11 speakers – because that's what the cool kids had a generation ago. Combine that with the induction roar from those carbs and the rasping tails, and you hear the Fairlady before you see it.

And when you do see it, your brain struggles to reconcile the blend of classic race car, flawless modern-standard custom work, contemporary stance and, quite frankly, the sheer cartoon-like weirdness of it. This is a car that raises a lot of questions – and it has satisfying answers for every single one. Is it what most people might consider to be a traditional Liberty Walk build? No. But ask a few searching questions and you'll find that it's really the most traditional of them all. 🐞

TECH SPEC: FAIRLADY Z

Styling

Group 4 aero-dyna 'G-nose' conversion; Works-style wide arches; AIRONE flat-plane bootlid with ducktail; custom single-taillight rear panel debumpered and smoothed; custom Prince R380/KPGC10 race livery.

Tuning

L28 2.8-litre straight-six, bored and stroked to over 3.0l; triple Solex twin-choke carbs with Pipercross filters; ported and polished head with bigger valves in recut seats; KEW high-compression pistons and conrods; KEW crankshaft; Garage Okazaki cam; aluminium radiator; MSD ignition; custom straight-through exhaust system with twin upswept tails.

Chassis

Custom 10.5x14in (front) and 11x14in (rear) steels; 225/40 Toyo Proxes T1-R (front) and 245/525-14 Liberty Walk race tyres (rear); custom AirREX air-ride setup.

Interior

Classic PRE bucket seats; colour-coded rollcage; deep-dish steering wheel with LB Works centre; line-lock control on gearstick; Auto Meter Pro-Comp rev counter; vintage Pioneer audio.



The Fairlady has one of the all-time classic dashboards





Photography: Daniel Pullen Car: Datsun Fairlady Z Owner: Wataru Kato-san

THE FC PORTFOLIO





Photography: Kevve.be Car: Audi TTS Owner: Nick De Vreught

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'Lude Behaviour

Words Joe Partridge Photography Ade Brannan

The first-generation Prelude always looked faster than it was. But Honda aficionado Rich Voaden is working hard to turn that around, with his unique, insanely powerful and beautifully poised restomod project...



HONDA PRELUDE

You don't see a lot of Quaaludes these days, do you? That makes sense really, since they officially went out of production in 1985, and the world's moved on a bit in the last 30-odd years. But what is this strangely spelled word, some of you may be wondering? Well, Quaaludes were sedative-hypnotic pills manufactured for the treatment of insomnia, which counter-culture types in the 1960s quickly realised provided a euphoric high. Known as 'ludes, mandies and disco biscuits, these little tablets are one of those bizarre historical quirks representing something hugely popular for a long time, then quickly disappeared altogether, like a the Cadbury's Spira or Bill Cosby's career.

Thankfully, there's another type of 'lude capable of providing a euphoric high in the 21st century. We refer, of course, to the Honda Prelude. Japan has given us some pretty unusual car names over the years, and not just the overtly wacky ones like the Bongo Friendee and the Mysterious Utility Wizard, but the ones that fly under the radar.

Prelude is an odd name for a car. The literal meaning of the word is an introduction to something more significant. So what is it exactly that Honda's niche sports coupé was preparing us for? Honestly, it doesn't matter, as the Prelude has always existed comfortably within its own skin and, while it's never been one of the marque's biggest sellers, it's found a lot of happy buyers who tend to remain loyal. Prelude ownership is a badge of honour among Honda enthusiasts. It's not as obvious a choice as its key contemporary rivals, the Toyota Celica and Nissan Silvia, but it's a solid, dependable thing if looked after and the mechanicals are as bulletproof as you'd expect from a Honda.

RELATIVELY UNEXCITING

The Prelude nameplate debuted in 1978 and it's a first-generation Prelude we have here before the lens today. This sporty model had quite a lot of first-gen Accord mixed into its original recipe – the engine, brakes and four-wheel independent struts for starters. But it had its own bespoke and all-new chassis, as well as (ooh!) a power moonroof. It has to be said, however, that the sportiness was more in intent than execution. You got either 80bhp from the 8-valve 1.6 or 90bhp from the 12-valve 1.8. UK sales weren't huge, as it was relatively expensive and, unfortunately, relatively unexciting.





Rich has extracted 240bhp from the H22A



Sidling into the story from stage left at this point, with a wry grin on its satin-clearcoated face, is Mr X – or more specifically, MRX 9X. A genuine UK Prelude which has survived the ignominy of, er, being a bit slow, then being forgotten altogether for quite a long time, to find itself reborn as a fashion-forward and really quite quick example. A modern interpretation of what the Prelude always was, fusing Accord mechanicals with a slinky allure.

Rich Voaden is the man behind the transformation, and he knows a thing or two about making Hondas fast, faster, and even faster still. As Director at Performance Autoworks, he's had a hand in more than a few hot Hondas (and Mitsubishis), with his skills being perhaps best known to the modding community in the form of the H22-engined DC2 Integra campaigning in the Honda VTEC Challenge race series. (What's an H22? See the boxout above for further details.)

But why a first-gen Prelude, and where on earth did this rare treat come from? Well, rewinding all the way

Just what the heck is an H22?

Why, we're glad you asked. Honda's family of 'H' engines were the larger-displacement performance motors of the late-1990s and early-2000s, and the H22 is a bit of an icon. It debuted in the fourth-gen Prelude as the H22A1, offering between 140-190bhp from its DOHC VTEC architecture, and variants went on to be used in all sorts of Preludes and Accords. The engine in this feature car is based on an H22A, the 200bhp+ 2.2-litre unit found in the Accord Type R. And here's a fun H22 fact: in 1994, Honda Europe developed the H22A to compete in the Formula Three series, and that engine then evolved into the BTCC and JTCC motor used in the Accord Touring Cars. So this is an engine with a lot of racy heritage!



back to 1981, this hypno-'Lude was originally a Windsor Blue plodder, cursed with the 8-valve 1.6 along with a dim-witted three-speed slushbox. It enjoyed a fairly anonymous lifestyle until it was picked up by one of Rich's mates, a fella named Gaz Attwood. Gaz had every intention of returning the now dishevelled and dog-eared 'Lude to its former glory, although Mother Nature seemed to have other ideas and refused to loosen her grip on the increasingly shabby Honda.

Eventually, he reached a crossroads: throw a bunch of time and money at it, or throw it in the bin. This was the moment at which Rich was able to swoop in with a Plan C. He eagerly scooped it up, brought it home and... well, ignored it a bit, to be honest. The thing was already crumbling, there was no rush. He took a few months to figure out a plan of attack, and when the time finally came to roll up his sleeves and get busy, get busy is precisely what he did.

Given his enthusiasm for the H22 engine, that was always inked in as motive power choice from day one, so the first order of business was to hoik out the boat anchor and mock up the architecture for the Type R makeover. Out came the angle grinder, brutally and mercilessly reimagining the engine bay, spurring Rich on to tackle the rest of the body resto.

And what a resto it was! The non-exhaustive list of areas that seriously needed addressing included the floorpans, sills, A-pillars, front wings, doors, roof, scuttles, rear panel and lower rear quarters. The thing was as rotten as the proverbial pear, and the flawless straightness you see today is testament to endless hours of swearing in the workshop. Once straight and



Getting the aggressively wide Rota Kyushas in required some serious arch butchery

true, the retro silhouette was augmented by a set of 3-inch arch flares in order to cover the aggressively wide Rota Kyushas planned (which in itself required a huge amount of arch butchery), along with a custom chin spoiler and a unique ducktail spoiler cunningly reworked from an item destined for an E30 BMW. And with the body all the right shape and the engine choice decided upon, it was time to start on the total pain-in-the-arse job of working out how to make the chassis cope with a sodding great wodge of additional horsepower...

CREATING PROTOTYPES

You don't just buy upgraded suspension for these cars off-the-shelf – nobody makes them because nobody owns these things. But helpfully Rich has a long-standing relationship with MeisterR, who he was able to work with to develop some prototype coilovers for the first-gen Prelude platform. The front ARB was then modded for castor adjustment, and a couple of Group 4 strut braces were knocked up by JB Fabrication.

All of this was beginning to slot neatly into place, so Rich returned to the body and buried himself in endless hours of filling, sanding, priming and sweating, before delivering it to OHWorks for a delicious slathering of



OWNER PROFILE:

Name: Rich Voaden

Age: 46

Occupation: Director/technician of Performance Autoworks

First car: 1978 Mk4 2.0 Cortina (rare German-market 2-door)

Favourite car: My restored and very modified Mk3 Capri 3.2 S

Favourite modification to this car?

Tough one! The front three-quarter view makes me smile and I love the engine bay. Oh, and the tartan rear seat and everything it stands for: it's a nod to the past piss-takes of 'typical old Honda drivers'. It also marks the territory of the car that belongs to my dog.

Any more plans? I need to remove the ducktail spoiler and do a little bit more work on that to be 100 percent happy with it. Work on a whole new separate front anti-roll bar and radius rod setup to really nail the front suspension. Driver-side bucket seat and harness which can be swapped in for track days. And possibly work on another motor build with higher compression, forged internals and wilder cams – not that it needs more power, but we all want it don't we?





Bedford Rascal clear headlamps and a custom chin spoiler. #boom

TECH SPEC: HONDA PRELUDE

Styling

Full body resto; metallic gunmetal grey paint with satin clearcoat; front and rear arches sectioned with modified inner arches; 3in ABS wide arches; Toyota Hilux wing-mounted mirrors; Bedford Rascal clear headlamps; custom ducktail (modified from BMW E30 item); custom steel chin spoiler blended into valance.

Tuning

2.2-litre H22A DOHC VTEC, rebuilt and ported PDE Accord Type R head; Piper cams; three-angle valve seats; Skunk2 vernier pulleys; balance shaft delete; manual-tensioner cambelt conversion; custom baffled sump; Accord Type R intake manifold and throttle body, carbon fibre airbox with custom sealed cold air intake; custom PLM Ram Horn exhaust manifold; custom stainless steel twin-silencer exhaust system; Honddata P28 S300 V3 ECU; custom Mk2 CRX VT fuel tank; custom engine mount housings; custom five-speed manual gearbox (based on Accord Type R unit – with 1st-gen Prelude 1st and 2nd gears, Accord Type R 3rd and 4th, JDM 4th-gen Prelude 5th, Type R final drive, and LSD); Exedy ST1 clutch; Competition Clutch ultra-lightweight flywheel; custom driveshafts; 4th-gen Prelude shifter mechanism and cables in modified trans tunnel.

Chassis

8x15in Rota Kyusha wheels; 205/50 Yokohama Advan Neova AD08 tyres; custom MeisterR coilovers; custom front ARB with shim-adjustable castor; reinforced front LCAs, Superflex polybushes; Group 4 strut tower braces front and rear; front hub modified to accept larger VW bearings; EK Civic front spindles; channelled; reinforced and gusseted front chassis legs; FN2 Civic Type R front callipers with 280mm Ford Mondeo discs; 2nd-gen Prelude rear callipers on custom carriers with 240mm discs; Ferodo DS2500 pads; HEL Performance braided lines; Castrol React brake fluid.

Interior

Original interior fully refurbished; rear bench trimmed in tartan; leather Mitsubishi Starion front seats on custom rails; MOMO leather steering wheel; auto pedal box converted to manual with clutch pedal and master cylinder; full rewire to accept PGM-Fi engine and Honddata management; Kenwood DAB headunit; JVC coaxial front speakers; Pioneer rear shelf speakers; battery relocated to boot.

metallic gunmetal grey, toned down with a satin clearcoat – so no, that's not a wrap, it's a pukka paintjob!

Next it was back to the engine build. Rich based the motor around a JDM H22 block, with a heavily reworked head, Piper cams, Type R intake manifold and throttle body, all governed by a Honddata to kick out a cheery 240bhp. Which is quite a lot in a car this diddy. The gearbox is a work of art too, and demonstrates what a Honda aficionado this guy is: the Accord Type R 'box has been gutted and stuffed with first-gen Prelude first and second gears, Accord Type R third and fourth, JDM fourth-gen Prelude fifth, Type R final drive, and an LSD. So clever our heads are spinning.

All in all, it took 17 months of graft and ingenuity to pull this car together, and as it artfully angles itself before Ade's expert eye (that colour's a bitch to photograph, apparently!), Rich can allow himself a satisfied smile. That's not to say he's resting on his laurels though. Soon after our shoot, the car ventured out on track at Castle Combe for a proper shakedown, Rich having increased the spring rates a bit and tweaked the ARB. It performed incredibly well but highlighted a few areas requiring improvement, mainly around steering geometry and driveshaft length. Little tricks and tweaks to get it perfect – and you can be damn sure it will be perfect when he's done, as that's just the way this guy works. What he's created here is a psychotropic retro freakout. Who needs Quaaludes when we've got Preludes? 🐣



The 'box has a first-gen Prelude first and second gears, Accord Type R third and fourth, JDM fourth-gen Prelude fifth and a Type R final drive

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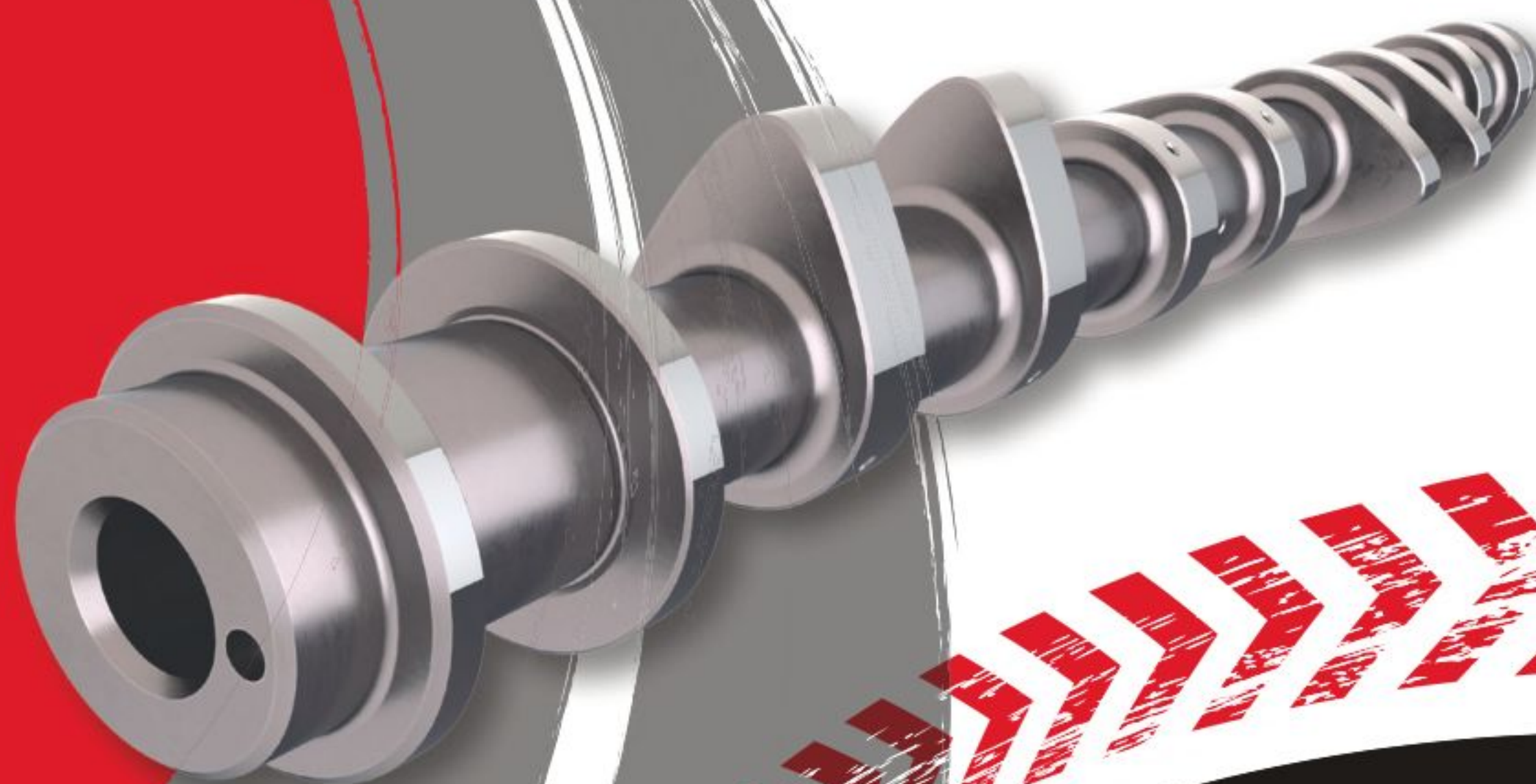
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DIY DAY JOBS & WEEKEND WONDERS

SPARK PLUGS

Everything you need to know to change yours...

Words: Midge Photos: Jules



We all know that petrol engines need spark plugs to ignite the air:fuel mix in the cylinders. We've all seen a spark plug too, and it's obvious how they work – the coil creates an electrical spark, sends it through the plug, petrol goes bang, and everyone's a winner.

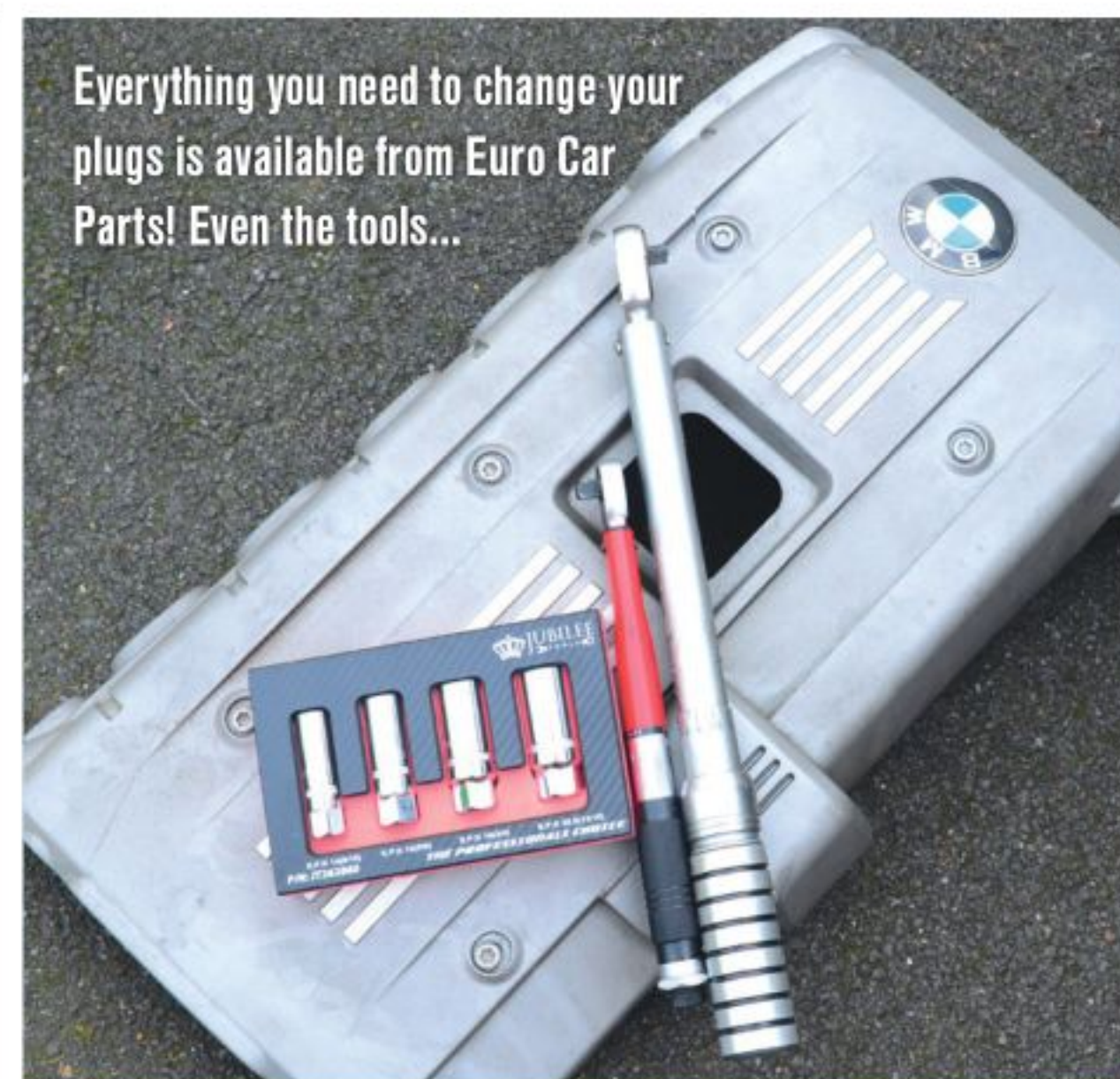
So why is it then, that most of us (yes, us FC monkeys included) only really change our plugs when things go wrong? Our cars start coughing and jerking, plugs get swapped, and all is right with the world. But why waste all that potential performance up until then?

The truth is that spark plugs wear out, they often get all coked up with carbon, and they get less and less efficient as time goes on. Plugs that have been knocking around forever need more voltage to bridge the gaps, and they can cause problems like misfires, harder

starting, increased emissions, lower MPG, and even failure of other parts due to unburned fuel entering the exhaust and creating higher temperatures. In other words, shitty old plugs ensure you're not getting the very best out of your engine. And that's before you even start on the tuning!

In reality you should be checking your plugs at every service, and changing them every 20K miles or so, possibly even more in high-performance builds. Contra to popular belief too, the worst thing you can do is clean the tips with a wire brush or abrasive. You're always far better off replacing them.

Luckily though, changing yours isn't all that expensive, and about as simple as mechanical jobs get. Here's what you need to know for this afternoon...



Everything you need to change your plugs is available from Euro Car Parts! Even the tools...

THE GEAR

Fitting Time: No more than half an hour, depending on the car.

Costs:Plugs, £5-30 (each)

Main Tools:Plug socket

.....Torque Wrench

.....Feeler gauge

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CHOOSING YOUR PLUGS

There are many types of spark plug out there, all designed with different performance, longevity and prices in mind. The first, and most obvious, thing to find out is what plugs your manufacturer actually recommends for your engine. Platinum and iridium plugs may be seen as a performance upgrade over 'standard' copper-nickel plugs for many, but many manufacturers now specify these in the first place, making them more of an essential.



PLUG TYPES

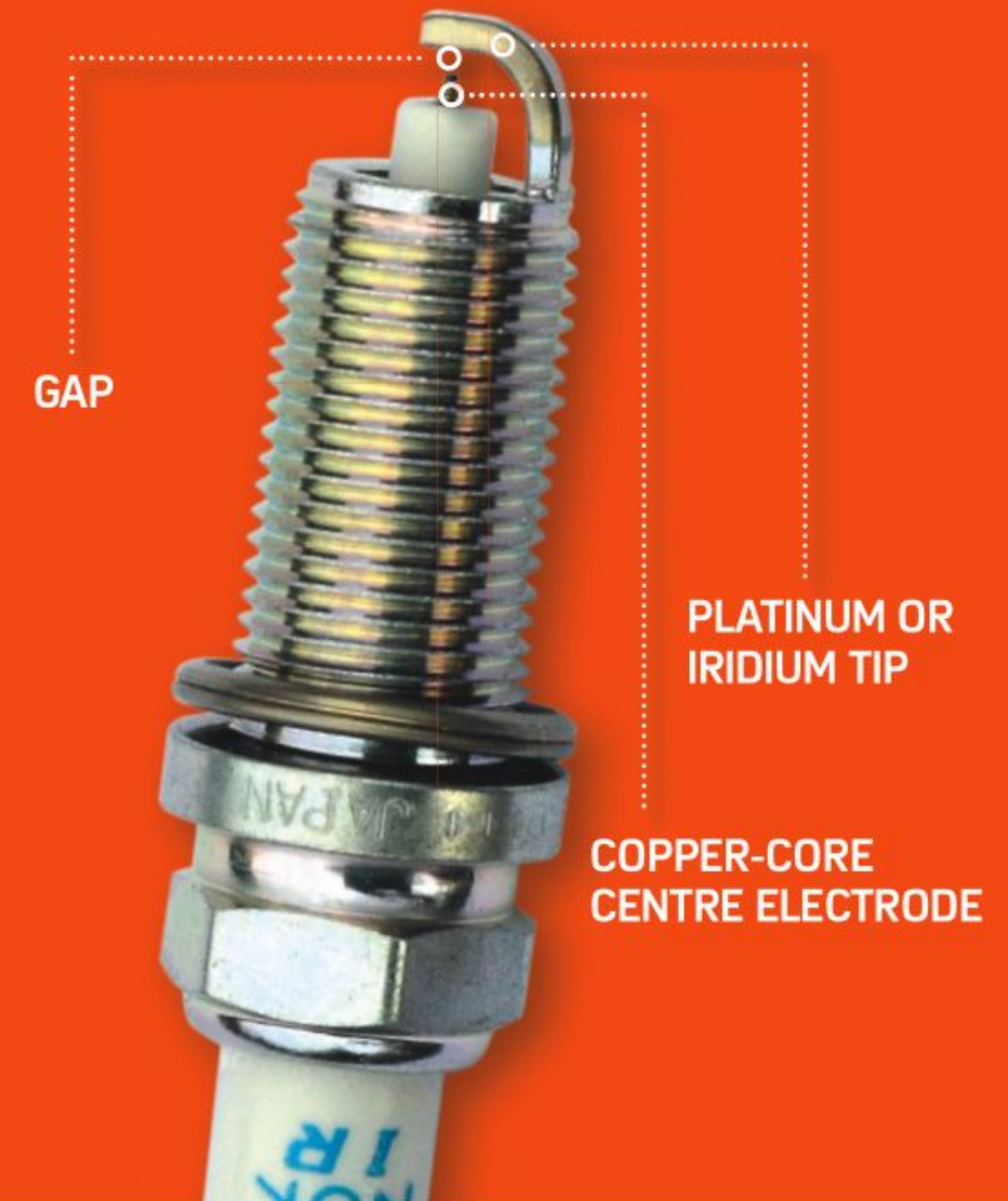
As with all these different materials, there are different characteristics to consider.

Copper-nickel plugs for example have a copper core with a nickel-coated electrode (to withstand the extreme temperatures). They may be seen as a little old skool nowadays, mostly because modern engines tend to produce a higher energy spark (often around 40,000 volts) which reduces their lifespan. But they do tend to be cheap, and sometimes are said to produce the best spark in forced induction/high compression engines.

Platinum-tipped plugs cost a bit more, but because platinum is harder than nickel, they tend to withstand erosion for longer. They also operate at higher temperatures, helping to burn off carbon deposits. Additionally, there's 'double platinum' plugs where both the centre and ground electrodes are coated for higher performance and longevity.

Iridium plugs are a tuner favourite. These tend to offer a more complete combustion and better power delivery because of their enhanced conduction. They also last longer than copper-nickel plugs (albeit not as long as platinum) and are not only a popular upgrade on high performance cars like RX-7s and M3s, but many aftermarket items are specifically developed for those vehicles. These are often seen as the finest and are recommended by manufacturers and tuners alike. But there's also silver-tipped plugs, offering the best thermal conductivity, although it can come at the expense of longevity.

You may notice that some plugs, usually copper-nickel items, have more than one ground electrode. These are less about performance and more about increasing longevity. With these the spark jumps to a different electrode each time, distributing the wear for a longer life.



DO IT!



1 LOCATE YOUR PLUGS

Most engines need one plug per cylinder and nowadays the vast majority are 4-cylinder jobs with the plugs in the top (or front) of the head. Easy peasy, eh?

That's not to say it's always the case. Hemi V8s, Alfa 'Twin Sparks' and even little three-cylinder smart cars have two plugs per cylinder, and not all plugs are a doddle to get to either. If you have a Scooby or GT86 where they mount in the side of the engine, or a transverse-mounted V6 (Alfa Romeo and VW engines spring to mind) where you have a bank of three plugs at the back, gaining access can be a little trickier because you may have to move a whole load of stuff out of the way

first. Not hard, but time consuming and fiddly none the less.

The premise is a simple one though, you'll always need to remove the old plugs before you can pop in the new ones. So, first remove any cosmetic engine covers and find where your plugs are mounted.

Generally speaking, most cars will have either HT leads or coil packs to send the spark from the coil/distributor, these will need to be removed to get to the plugs. Most HT leads simply pull off the top, and the same can be said for many coil pack setups. Other coil packs are bolt-down items, so check for fixings before you go yanking away.



It's not always as important with coil packs, but certainly with HT leads (especially ones that are all the same length) it's crucial that they go back to the same cylinder that they were removed from, so they can fire in the right order. With this in mind it makes sense to label each lead, or simply replace the plugs one by one. It's also best practice to label coil packs after you unclip the wiring and remove them, just in case.





2 WHIP 'EM OUT

Once the plugs are exposed you can use your extra-special, spanky plug socket to take them out. Why do you need a proper plug socket rather than a standard deep socket? It's simply that plug sockets are specially designed to have built-in protection for the ceramic isolator on the plugs. These will also hold them in nice and securely to make replacement easier.



We'd always recommend taking your plugs out and replacing them one by one. Removing them all at the same time just increases the risk of dropping a wayward bolt or something down a hole into the combustion chamber – we've all done it, and they're a right pain to get out! Be safe not sorry.

Before you remove the plugs though, it can



also be a good idea to have a quick look with a torch to make sure there's no crud or corrosion around the plug that may drop into the cylinder when you unscrew it.

Most of the time this can be easily cleaned up with a screwdriver or perhaps blown out with an airline. When you're finally happy, unscrew your plug and simply slide it out.

3 CHECK YOUR NEW PLUGS

Right, your old plug is out and the new one is about to go in. First though, you may want to check the spark gap between the central and ground electrodes with a feeler gauge. Most plugs come 'pre-gapped' nowadays, that is prepared for a standard engine from the factory.

They'll also have a protective tube over the thread to stop the electrode bending if the box is dropped. Having the correct gap is important though. This is the bit that the spark jumps across to ignite the air and fuel mix, so it's worth a check – if anything to make sure that all your new plugs are the same.

For a standard engine, you'll find the correct gap size in the manual but for modified engines the size of the gap can vary. This is because lower performance engines generally need a larger gap to increase spark duration for a better burn

(when the air-fuel charge is less compressed). As compression rises, less spark is needed, the reason why diesel engines, which run ultra-high compression, don't need a spark (or spark plug) at all. Put simply though, too wide a gap can cause misfires, too small and they will not yield enough spark to fully ignite the air:fuel mix.

In the same way, some highly tuned engines will utilise 'colder' plugs than standard. A lower performance engine will need to retain some heat for an efficient burn, so will use hotter plugs. When you increase the temperature in the engine (especially by increasing the compression ratio) then there is a danger of overheating and pinking. Colder plugs will provide more efficient dissipation of heat because they have a shorter insulator which helps remove heat away from the combustion chamber quickly.



All that said, if you're concerned about the optimum heat-range of your new plugs, it's unlikely that you haven't done this job a million times before!



4 INSTALL AND TORQUE

The most important thing is to get the plug seated correctly at the right torque. Spark plugs are screwed directly into the cylinders, and have to endure an unbelievable amount of pressure without ripping themselves out. If you knacker

the thread by over-tightening or cross-threading, it isn't going to hold in there very securely is it? Not having your plugs correctly seated will inevitably lose you power too, up to 40 percent in some cases!

There are two main types of plug: 'flat seat' jobs, which have a crush washer to do the sealing, or 'tapered' plugs, which are designed to fit in a tapered recess, much like a wheel nut.

The ones you fit will always be the same as what you've just taken out, but either way, always use a torque wrench to install the new ones. Bizarrely there are many 'spark plug kits' on the market that simply include a ratchet, probably because torque wrenches are expensive. But using one is the only way of ensuring you don't over-tighten your plugs. Very often the torque required is less than you might think.

You'll find the torque setting in the manual. It's usually around 25NM or so. When screwing in your new plug, take your time and be careful

not to cross-thread or miss the hole and bend the ground electrode.

Once you're all torqued down (and all your other plugs have been replaced of course), you can put the coil packs or HT leads back on and you're good to go. Lovely.



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AS EASY AS



The Mk3 TT platform has been with us for a few years now, and we're seeing some really impressive builds appear on the scene. Nick De Vreught's 2016 TTS is one of our favourites – power, style, stance, this thing's got the lot. And he makes it look like child's play...

Words **Daniel Bevis** Photography **Kevve.be**

Your first car always holds a special place in your

heart. More often than not it's a clapped-out old snorter, something you buy for a couple of hundred quid which lasts a few weeks before colourfully dissolving into an oily puddle of rust flakes and dejection. This is all character building stuff and invariably you'll get a hankering for that particular model in the future when you're a little more solvent and can afford to buy a proper one.

If your first car was a £200 Nova that almost immediately exploded, it's no surprise to find yourself 20 years in the future thinking, 'Hmm, can I rationally justify blowing five grand on a really nice Nova now?' For Belgian enthusiast Nick De Vreught, things happened slightly differently.

His first car was rather better than the average sorry rot-box; a Mk1 Audi TT with a brawny 1.8T under that beguiling wraparound bonnet, which is a lot more impressive than most things you'll find in the average sixth-form car park. Indeed, he loved it so much that, after a bunch of time had passed and numerous cars had been and gone, Nick decided to relive those halcyon days of youth in slightly updated form, by buying himself a Mk2 TT.

This all worked out very nicely for him. The fella was living his best life in the rakish coupé of his teenage dreams, when one day he found himself chatting to his parents about what his next car might possibly be. "You like Audi TTs," his mum reasoned, "so I bet your next car will be another one of those." Like some manner of prophet or oracle, so it came to pass. Nick's a good boy and he does as he's told, and given that the Mk3 TT was starting to present itself readily



on the used market, he set about finding one. And it was as easy as 1-2-3. "After searching for a few days I found a Mk3 TTS – the TT's bigger brother," says Nick. "I contacted the seller and went to view it that evening. As soon as I saw it sitting there on his driveway, I just fell in love with it."

LOVE AT FIRST VIEW

That first impression is all-important when you're buying a car; if you know, you know. You've got to trust those instincts. Of course, it helped a lot that the seller worked for Audi Germany and was a true-blue enthusiast who'd cherished and pampered the car. With just 8,000km on the clock it



HOT RIDE

➔ was essentially like new, so it was the perfect evolutionary link from Nick's old Mk1, through the beloved Mk2, and stepping onward into the next set of adventures.

"This was my first full-on project," Nick continues. "I've always lowered my cars static and changed the wheels, but I've never done anything like this. This is next-level." It really is, and he's keen to point out that initially things were never meant to go this far, and the plan from the off was to keep things simple and relatively stock... which is something we hear from about 90 PERCENT of feature car owners! Once you get started, it's hard to slow the impulses. We all get over-excited. You need to feed your momentum monster.

"I liked it so much as standard," he grins. "But yeah, when you have all these bad influences around you, stuff's bound to happen. I'd actually bought a set of KW V3 coilovers for it before I'd even bought the car, so I was placed to roll static right away. It was after a month or so that I had the idea to fit air-ride, and from that point onward everything changed!"

CHASSIS MAKEOVER

It was the legendary team at KEAN Suspensions who were drafted in to carry out the chassis makeover. This name should be familiar to regular readers; Kenny and Andy are basically suspension superheroes, and anything they don't know about air-ride, static and hydraulic lows could be scrawled on the back of a postage stamp. If you're in Belgium (or even if you're not), these are the dudes to call.

"I'd joined up with the Lowhouse Crew in Belgium, going to a lot of car shows together and they even have their own event, and at that time everything just turned around and I started seriously modifying the car," says Nick. "For a couple of months I found myself spending time after work down at KEAN, throwing ideas around with Kenny and



CTS Turbo air intake system + high-blow turbo inlet pipe + outlet pipe kit = 417bhp

WHAT MAKES A TTS SPECIAL?

306bhp, for starters. Obviously Nick's example has quite a lot more than that! But in factory form that's what you get, along with all sorts of other extras that elevate it above the everyday TT. All of Audi's S models receive the Quattro system as standard, along with uprated brakes and suspension and model-specific aero. The Mk3 TTS adds an extra 79bhp over the lesser variants, and this isn't just a remap, there are uprated internals along with revised intercooling, the suspension has Magnetic Ride, the body wears a unique kit, the brake callipers have 'TTS' written on them (ooh!) and you get the Virtual Cockpit, which is basically the future of dashboards. It's like magic. So the next time you see a TTS, you'll know it's more than just a badge. It's the connoisseur's choice.



20-inch JB1s from Water-cooledIND are a bit tasty

Andy about what to do with the car." After tailoring the plan to Nick's specs and requirements, the fellas built a bespoke air-ride system for the TTS which uses Air Lift Performance 3P management, and the difference it's made to the profile really is staggering – when the Audi airs out, angels weep and unicorns sing, rainbows appear and the world takes on a Disney-like filter. It's that good.

This startling aesthetic is helped along by the rims of course, that goes without saying. After much deliberation, Nick's opted for a set of JB1s from WatercooledIND in a robust and no-messing 20-inch diameter, finished in an on-fire and on-fleek citrus hue to complement the fruity upholstery within. "It's really hard choosing a set of wheels for a project," he says, echoing the thoughts of every reader out there (the struggle is real). "You have so many ideas and you need to check everything out; this choice was made because you just don't see these rims very often and I wanted the car to stand out. The finish isn't a normal copper, it has a couple of other colours mixed in, so they change in different light and at different angles."

Now, you could never describe a rims-and-drop TTS as 'all show and no go', given how rapid they are in standard form. But you'll also be gratified to learn that Nick's project isn't simply a rims-and-drop exercise. He's worked hard to ensure that 'go' and 'show' are on a level pegging, and this is attributable in large part to the expertise of DVX Performance. These tuning eggheads were commissioned to jumble up the Audi's brains, applying a custom mix of the Stage 2+ remap along with a sportier reflash of the



“You don’t see these rims often – I wanted the car to stand out”



OWNER PROFILE:

Name: Nick De Vreught

Age: 26

Occupation: Sales advisor, MAN Trucks

Hobbies: Cars, food lover, enjoying life...

Favourite thing about your car: That would be driving to international car shows with my friends in convoy



It sure is smokin'!





Custom Maq Racing rollcage,
plus Bang & Olufsen audio

TECH SPEC: AUDI TTS

Styling

Mücke wide carbon fibre front wings; Xenonz/X-UK front grille; Rieger Tuning front lip; CarbonWurks mirrors; custom-made carbon rear spoiler and debadged carbon bootlid; gloss black diffuser.

Tuning

2.0-litre TFSI; CTS Turbo air intake system; CTS Turbo high-blow turbo inlet pipe; CTS Turbo outlet pipe kit; Forge Motorsport BOV; NGK Racing competition plugs; custom 3in downpipe and exhaust system; custom DVX Performance Stage 2+ remap; S-Tronic transmission with DVX Performance DSG reflash.

Power: 417bhp, 419lb/ft.

Chassis

9x20in Watercooled IND JB1 wheels; 225/30 Hankook Ventus S1 Evo tyres; custom KEAN Suspensions air-ride system with Air Lift Performance 3P management.

Interior

Custom Maq Racing rollcage; red shifter paddle extensions; Bang & Olufsen audio.

Thanks

Firstly I'd like to thank KEAN Suspensions, who made this build possible in every way – not just the suspension, they supplied everything and gave lots of advice. I'd also like to thank DVX Performance for the engine upgrades, because in the last couple of months I've been in so many countries with the car for events and you need to be sure you can trust the engine when you've modified it! NBD Detailing for keeping the car smooth and glossy with products from Labocosmetica; the Lowhouse Crew for being not only a group of car lovers, but also very close friends. And of course, last but not least, Kevve.be for the amazing pictures.

➔ DSG software to turn the TTS into something really quite devastating. In combination with a bunch of goodies from CTS Turbo – including their air intake system, high-blow turbo inlet pipe and outlet pipe kit – along with a Forge BOV and, essential for the noise as well as the ponies, a custom three-inch downpipe and exhaust system, Nick's now staring down the barrel of 417bhp. We've checked with a few motorsport engineers and been reliably informed that this particular performance figure is officially classified as 'an absolute shitload', so that's a nice thing to tick off the list.

A custom rollcage and some extended shifter paddles further ramp up the race aggression inside, while Nick's paid meticulous attention to the exterior upgrades to ensure the car is unique, beautiful to behold, and tastefully done. Each addition has been stirred into the mix to enhance and augment the factory lines rather than radically rework them, and the parts list is longer than you may at first suspect. Most radical among them are the front wings, which are wider items from Mücke crafted in carbon fibre, their weave lacquered and left exposed as a statement of purpose. These are joined by a custom-made carbon rear spoiler, and the section of the bootlid below it has cleverly been reworked in carbon fibre too. The mirrors are also crafted from the racy weave, and the nose enjoys a Xenonz/X-UK front grille and a Rieger Tuning lip. Rounding off the exterior mods is a gloss black diffuser, which artfully frames the bazooka-like quads of that custom pipework.

"My family think the car's crazy," Nick laughs. "And people in the street who see it rolling by are always watching like 'Huh?'. It gets a lot of positive feedback at car shows and the international ones are my favourite – my friends and I all drive different types of cars, and it's great for us all to get together, hang out, and get to know people who appreciate cars like this."

So there it is. It may not have been quite as simple as 1-2-3, but what Nick's achieved here is to build a fabulous interpretation of the Mk3 platform, starting with the already awesome TTS and taking it to strange and wonderful places. That Mk1 he had all those years ago sure has a lot to answer for. ➔



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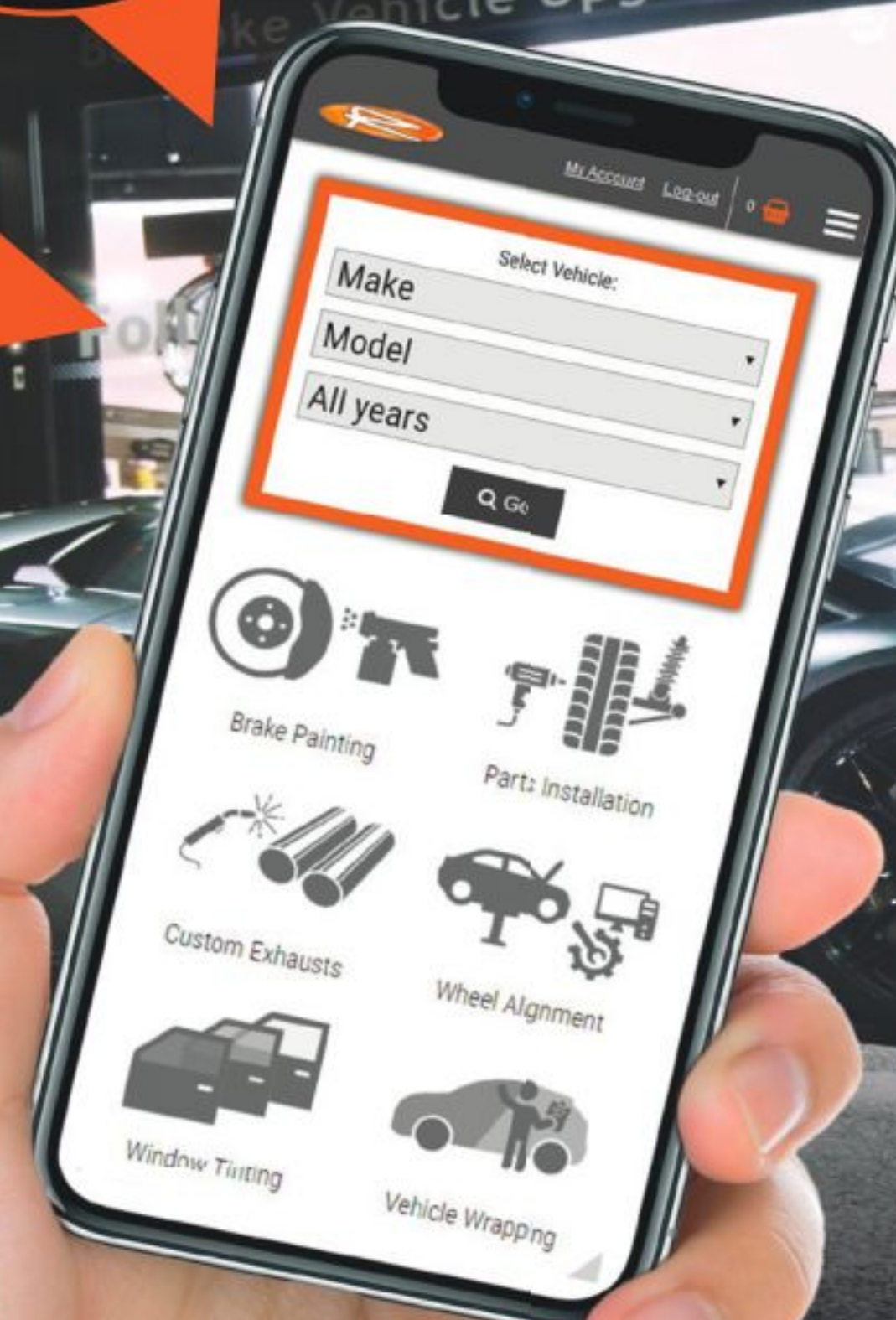
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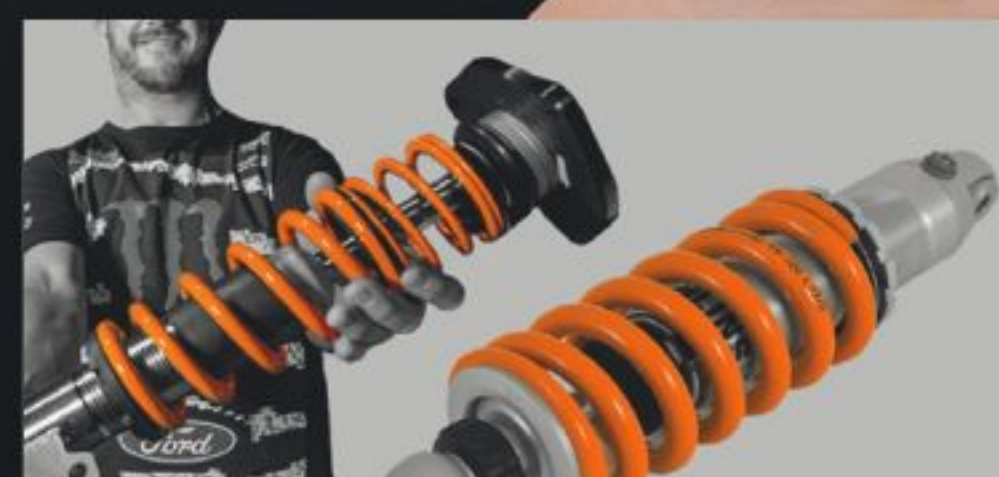
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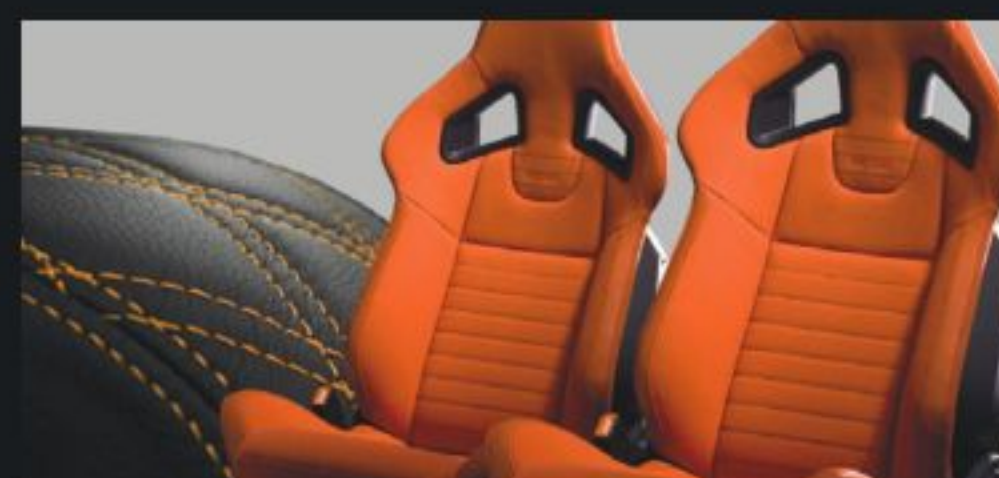
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RX-7 Pandem perfection



Damn!

TOKYO AUTO SALON 2019

Words and Pictures Dino Dalle Carbonare

Japan's tuning world continues to show us that it's perfectly able to evolve and adapt to new styles and flavours. But at the same time it's always capable of making sure it retains a certain *je ne sais quoi* that makes it instantly recognisable as JDM. And that's what the Tokyo Auto Salon does year in and year out. It offers a window into the Japan's car loving soul, serving up examples of where the scene has been, where it's at, and where it's trying to go.

Japan's history with performance continues to give direction to many tuners out there and this year's biggest surprise was HKS, pulling out their old TRB-02 high speed R33 GT-R from storage and rebuilding it into a fresh, modern-day proposition, yet keeping that '90s feel.

That was done to showcase the vast line up of new goodies it has on offer this year, from their ever-expanding list of GTIII turbos, billet bottom ends and as much electronics as you'd be prepared to throw at your interior. From performance, which defined the formative years of Japan's tuning affliction, it was on to what is happening today and for

both the lovers and haters out there, we can confirm the overfender is still very much a thing. Formally Rocket Bunny and now called Pandem, Kei Miura continues to give us reasons to buy older cars, attack them with an angle grinder and slap on FRP flares for a look you just can't argue against. Top picks this year were the Pandem 190E, the FC3S RX-7 sitting next to it, and a rather catching E24 at the KW booth, which looked like it had just finished a Group 4 race.

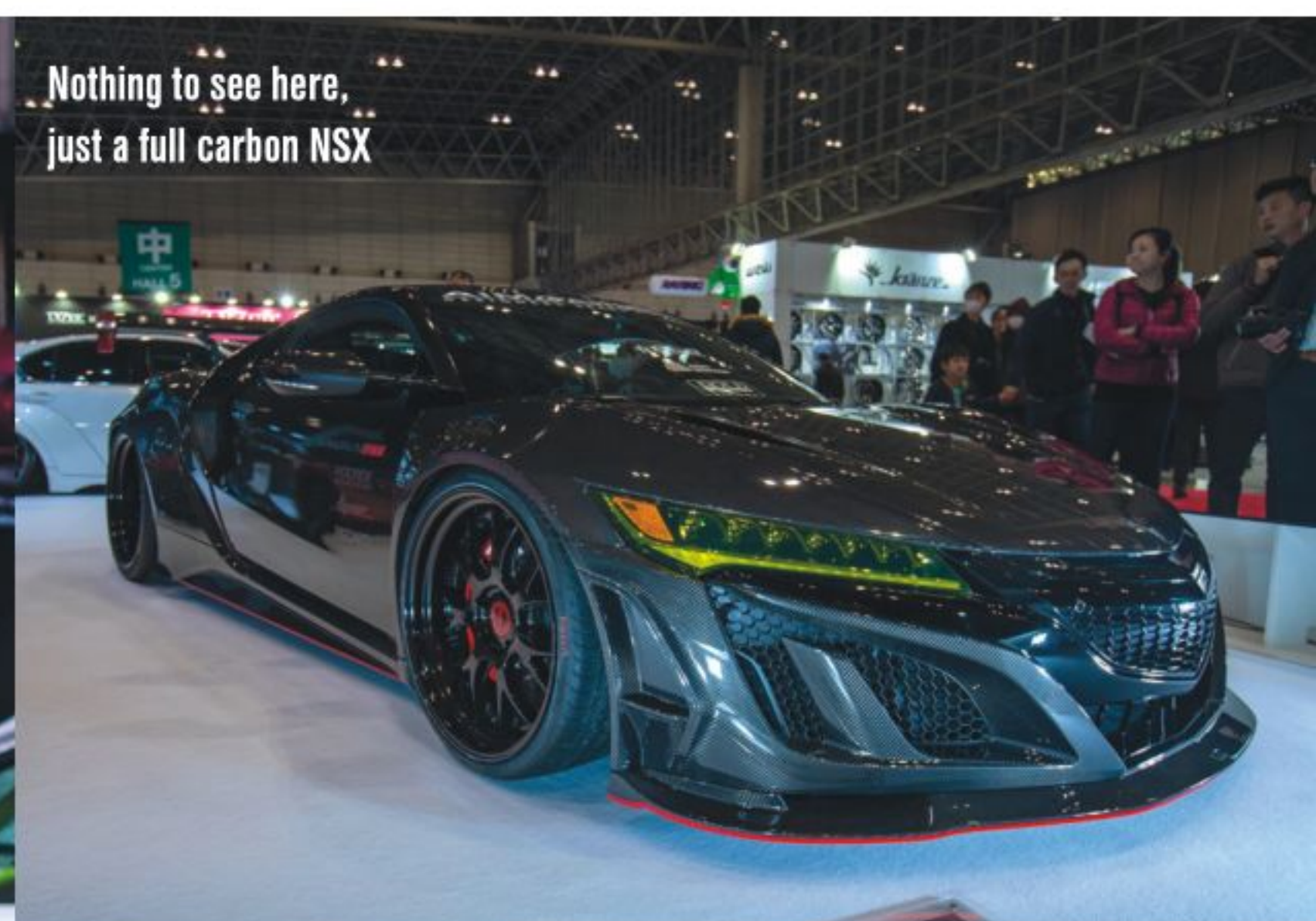
And the future – where is Japan going? Nobody has the answer to this but one thing is certain, even if the world slowly turns towards EVs, the Japanese will continue to figure out ways of making cars fun.



OUT THERE

↘ Lancia Delta Fenice 105

So what happens if a guy at your local circuit annihilates the track record you've held on to for years? The Delta Fenice is the answer. You get your best mates together and you build the craziest interpretation of Italy's famous all-wheel drive rally legend. This project is as far removed from a tuner car as you can imagine. The exterior was designed by a Subaru designer who honed his skills at Bertone, Italy. The suspension has been redesigned by two chaps who work at Honda's R&D centre. And the engine tuned by a master engine builder, making sure it's not only able to crank out over 600 horses, but also not self disintegrate while it does. Always a good thing! Oh and the 105 in the name is how many millimetres each of the four guards have been widened by.



It seems the Japanese love Euro cars as much as we love Jap cars. Full feature coming soon



The want is real



If Midge built an MPV...



Personally, we think it could do with a bigger grille



Wide-body, bagged and 850bhp! Is there a more perfect R33 in the world?



Garage Active R33 GT-R

You may remember hearing this name around about the same time last year, when Garage Active brought two carbon-fibre widebody R32 GT-Rs to TAS and schooled everyone at how you can go over the top without exaggerating.

This year it's much the same recipe applied to the BCNR33 and there's hardly anything we can fault on this car. It's wide, aggressive and sits slammed to the ground thanks to air suspension. While there's a 2.8L fully built RB26 motor under the bonnet mated to a large HKS GTIII 5R turbo, pushing an easy 850bhp.



OUT THERE



Pandem-kitted Merc 190E was our favourite Kei Miura creation



More UD than TAS



Fairlady Z rocking a G-nose



Liberty Walk 308 GTBL

We all knew it was going to happen sooner or later. Kato-san at Liberty Walk has made it his vocation in life to leave everyone at car shows shocked and surprised as he applies his "overfender it all" motto to some other unsuspecting car. Last year it was the Miura replica. This year it's a legit Ferrari 308 GTB, which has been dropped on its underbelly thanks to air suspension and fitted with black flares at each corner barely managing to contain the massive width of the LBW wheels the car runs. But that's not all. The Bosozoku Ferrari was joined by a pair of 458s which run an all new aero kit called LB-Silhouette Works GT, which widens the car dramatically but without any screwed on flares. The idea is to bring the GT racecar look to the street. Still, the coolest car at the booth was their little Suzuki Jimny, which was trying too hard to impersonate a G-wagen!



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FAST PROJECTS



ZERO EV TESLA-POWERED R32 DRIFTER

P078

The Skyline has been booked in for a high profile shakedown. Things just got serious...

START

NEVER FINISHED

MAIN MODS: TESLA ELECTRIC MOTOR • PB COILOVERS • JAFFA CAKES • 19-INCH WHEELS



GLEENDA'S AUDI RS4

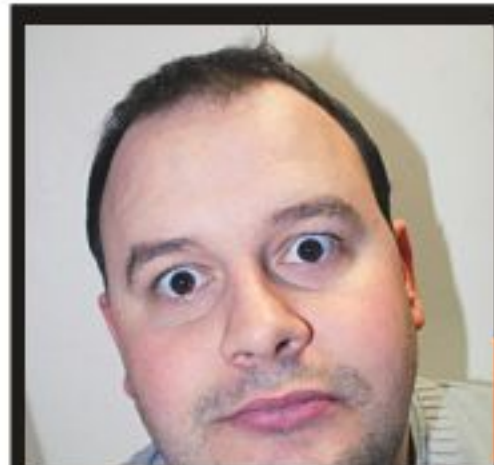
P080

He's still looking for a set of rims but in the meantime he's sorted the infotainment. Thanks to some bloke called Ken Wood.

START

NEVER FINISHED

MAIN MODS: MILLTEK EXHAUST • KW COILOVERS • KENWOOD HEADUNIT



SLIM JULES' BMW E91

P082

It's been a wheely good month for Jules and his Touring. That joke never gets old (yes it does – Midge).

START

NEVER FINISHED

MAIN MODS: HYDRO-DIPPED INTERIOR • BC COILOVERS • TINTS • DIAMOND CAR MATS • M SPORT CARBON WHEEL



MISSING IN ACTION



TOM'S R5 GT TURBO

MIA

If you follow Meguiar's on YouTube and Instagram you'll know that Tom and Dale aren't missing in action and that they've...

START

NEVER FINISHED

MAIN MODS: GIVE THE LAD A CHANCE



DALE'S 1971 MERCEDES W114

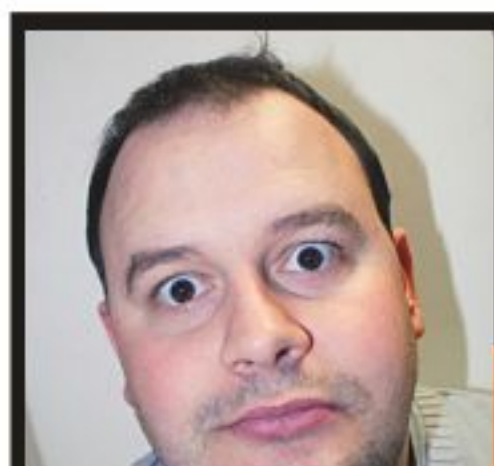
MIA

...made a lot of progress. But Jules forgot to ask them for the information in time for an update this month. The fool!

START

NEVER FINISHED

MAIN MODS: GIVE THE LAD A CHANCE



SLIM JULES' BMW E92

MIA

The E92 got a fresh set of EBC brakes but we've run out of pages. So you'll have to wait until next month to see them...

START

NEVER FINISHED

MAIN MODS: ADVAN TYRES • AIR LIFT AIR RIDE • AUTOSTARS • HYBRID TURBOS • MILLTEK EXHAUST • FORGE FMIC



MIDGE'S BEETLE 1.8T

MIA

Midge has been on holiday (again) in Iceland. He stayed in a posh ice hotel, ate reindeer and rode (and crashed)...

START

NEVER FINISHED

MAIN MODS: K&N INDUCTION KIT • COBRA RECLINERS • SMOOTHED FRONT BUMPER • AIR LIFT • RUSTY PAINT



MIDGE'S AUDI TT

MIA

... a snowmobile. That's why he hasn't been fiddling with his Vags this month. He's back now, so progress will resume soon.

START

NEVER FINISHED

MAIN MODS: 3M WRAP • VOSSEN WHEELS • AIR LIFT SUSPENSION • TUNED ENGINE • ICE INSTALL





ZERO EV'S TESLA-POWERED SKYLINE

What's that coming over the hill? Is it a monster, is it a monsteeer...? Well, yes actually...



As you can imagine, the Tesla-powered R32 build has attracted quite some attention over the past few months, exactly what you want from a demo car. But we weren't prepared for the offer we received a couple of months back from none other than Monster Energy...

They'd heard about the build and asked if we'd like superstar drifter, Luke Woodham, to get behind the wheel and do some demo runs at one of their upcoming Rallycross events. As you can imagine it took us approximately

0.001-seconds to say yes. The only thing standing in our way was finishing off a mountain of jobs to get the car ready...

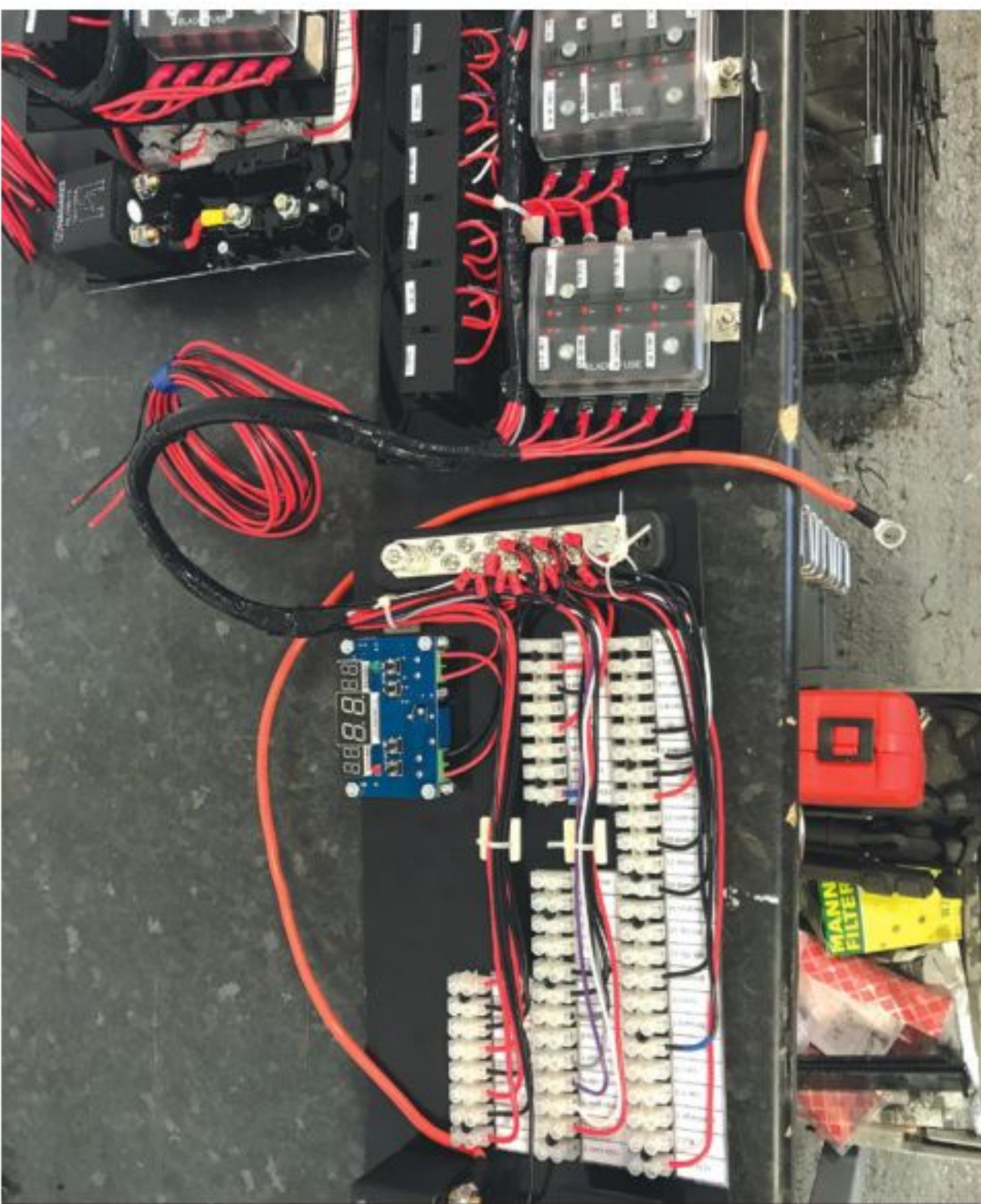
So we got to work. First up was welding the seat brackets in and getting the OBP hydraulic handbrake fitted before adding some extra safety by covering the batteries with a lid. Well, you don't want one of those coming through the windscreen and smacking you on the bonce, it would hurt, even with a lid on.

The biggest task was rewiring the low voltage side of the system though; this

entailed ripping out the temporary one and fitting a nice new one that is a hell of a lot tidier. After a quick test to make sure everything was working correctly, it was (no fire), we moved onto the outside.

Foolishly I thought that wrapping a car was a job I could tackle myself, how wrong was I? Very wrong! Luckily my mate Jake is a wrapper and after a stupidly long day/night he got the job done just in time for the event!

It's going to look sick shredding tyres with Luke Woodham behind the wheel...



THIS MONTH

OBP Hydraulic Handbrake	£150
Wrap materials.....	£120
Jake Jenkins' time	£priceless!
Total	£270

CONTACTS

<https://zero-ev.co.uk>



NEXT MONTH

We get that high profile shake-down under our belts...



GLENDA'S AUDI RS4 AVANT

Our Glenda makes a sound investment, with some help from Kenwood...



Looks wise, like myself, the RS4 has aged pretty well, especially considering it's about to enter its teenage years (unlike you – Jules).

Something that hasn't aged so well though is the audio and satnav system, so this month I finally got around to fitting the lovely shiny Kenwood DMX7017DABS doubleDIN and DRV-N520 dash cam that's been sitting in the office for a few months now.

Admittedly I did plan on fitting it all myself. I bought all the fitting kit from Connects2, including an Audi steering wheel interface so I wouldn't lose all the factory steering wheel controls. But after an hour or so of swearing at YouTube tutorial videos while sat in the freezing cold on my driveway I decided to give up. I was no closer to fitting anything and it looked like I had more wires than I started with. Yes, I know, poor show!

However, luckily for me I only live 20 minutes away from the audio and car tech gurus Automotive Control, so I did the sensible thing and got booked in. Fast

forward a few days later and all I had to do was watch someone else do all the hard work. And I am glad I did, as it was still a good few hours work for these guys and they know what they're doing. It seems the job was a tad more complicated than I had thought, so a big thanks to Viv, Craig and Nick at Automotive Control for fitting everything and Connects2 for the kit, that ensures the unit fits like factory.

So, how's the Kenwood DMX7017DABS? Well, it's flawless. It does everything you could want a headunit to do and all with ease. The stunning 7-inch LED screen display is crystal clear and the Apple CarPlay works seamlessly with my iPhone X. Which means I now have easy access to my music, messages, contacts list for calls and most importantly Spotify and Apple Maps, which is great as the previous satnav thought I was off-roading every time I took a 'new' road that's been built in the last decade. It also has a DAB+ tuner, Bluetooth hands-free

calling and features a DashCam link, so I've also added the compact and rather clever Kenwood DRV-N520 Drive recorder into the mix. This dash cam features wide-angle super HD recording at 27fps, a G-sensor, safety alerts including front collision and lane departure warnings and it can all be controlled from the headunit.

To say I'm seriously impressed would be an understatement. Anyway, I'm off for a drive and some Classic FM...



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Erm, so which...
Erm... Help!



With the Kenwood installed Glenda is now
considering living in his car permanently



Someone who actually knows
stuff sorts our Glenda out



Just in time for Neighbours



Right, so where's Tetris then?

THIS MONTH

Kenwood DMX7017DABS headunit.....	£379
Kenwood DRV-N520 dashcam	£149
Automotive Control labour & fitting	£120
Connects2 CTKAU04 installation kit.....	£85

Total: £733

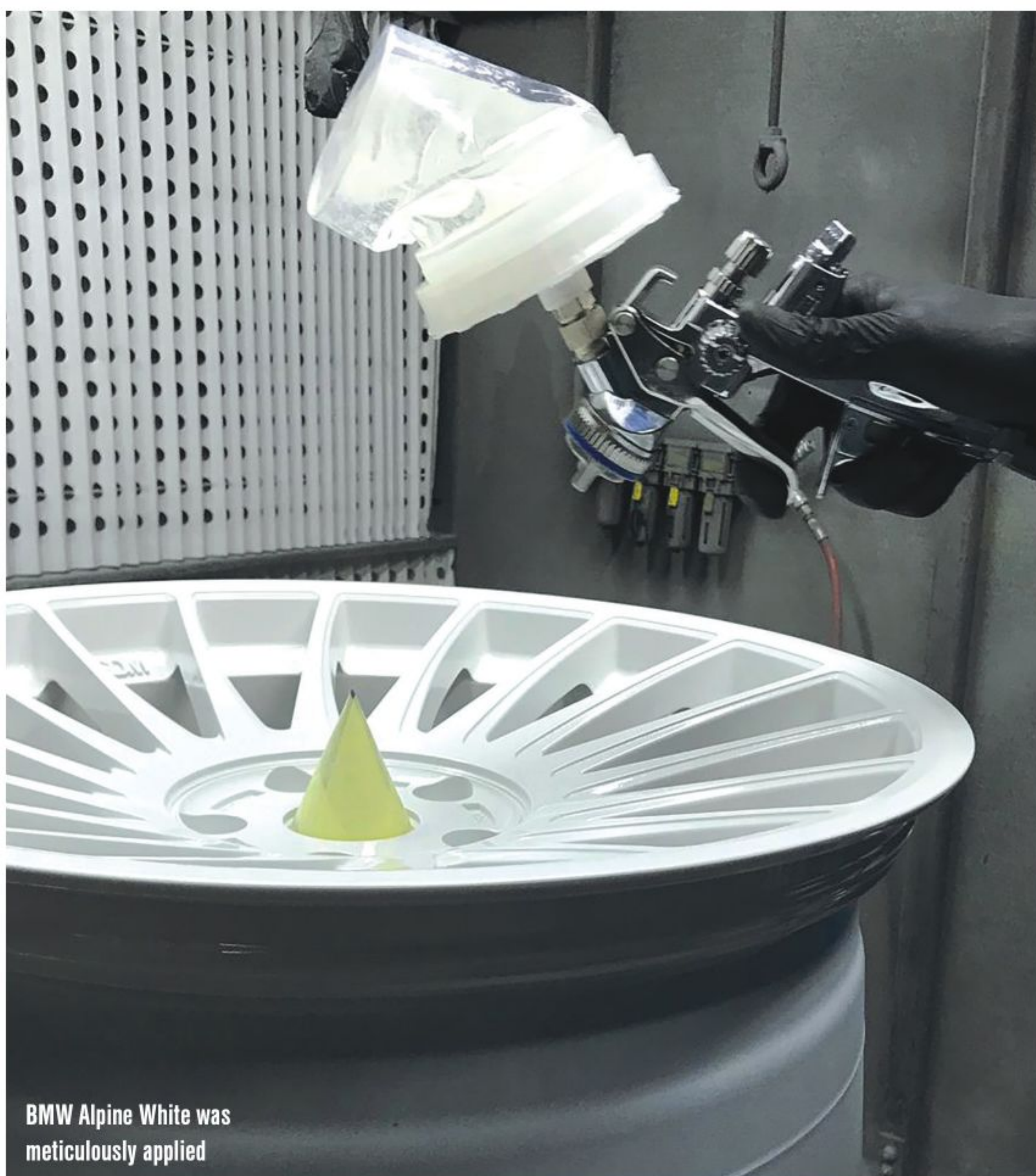
CONTACTS

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FAST PROJECTS



JULES' BMW 325i TOURING

My mum used to say 'waste not, want not' and that method has clearly rubbed off on me...



Did you read the magazine last month (if not, why not?)? Anyway, if you did you would have read about the new Autostar wheels I fitted to my E92, and lovely they are too. But this poses the question, what did I do with the 3SDM 0.04s that they replaced? Well, I decided that I'd slap them on the E91 (waste not, want not), while I wait for the rims I've ordered from America to turn up. The problem was, they'd seen better days (I've still no idea how the curbing happened) and I couldn't fit them looking like that. A quick Google later and I'd found a local company called Diamond Styling, they were just 10-minutes down the road in Sevenoaks, Kent. Bonus. After a quick chat with main man Jack, I slapped the 3SDMs in the car and dropped them off.

Just a few days later Jack was back on the phone to say they were ready for



collection. How's that for service?

The fresh BMW Alpine White finish is flawless and there's no evidence of that nasty curbing – they basically look brand spanking new again. A top job by a bunch of guys that love their wheels as much as we do. I'd thoroughly recommend them to anyone looking for a quality wheel refurbishment company.

All I need to do now is bolt them on, but not before the coilovers are fitted, that's a modifying crime.

THIS MONTH

19-inch wheel refurb..... **£384**
Total **£384**

CONTACTS

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NEXT MONTH

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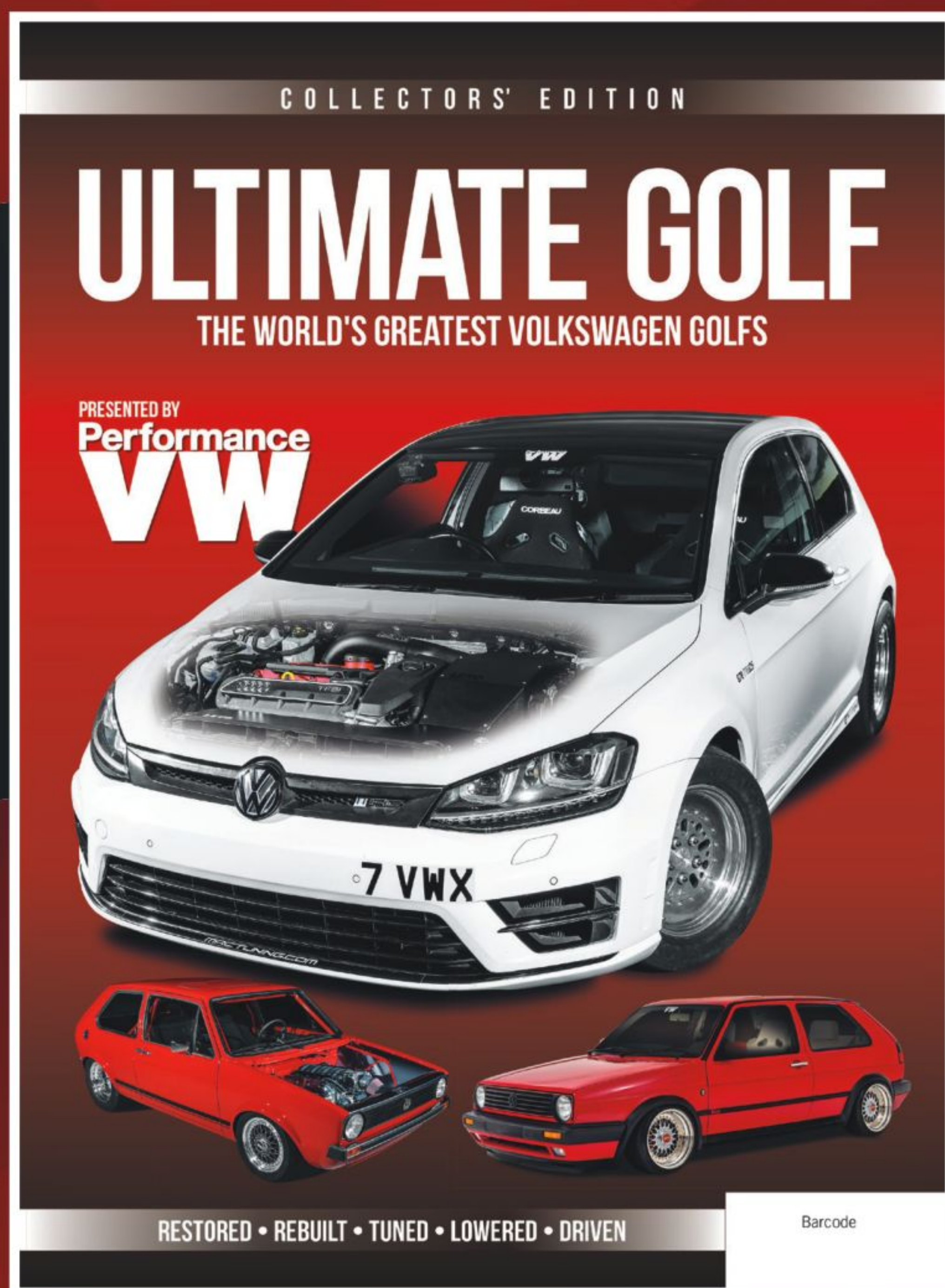
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WILD CARD

Words: **Stav** Photography: **Dave cox**

Driftwork's Phil Morrison flew all the way to Japan to pick up this 550bhp, wide-body Porsche 964 Turbo. And here's why...

Social media, while it has its downsides, is a wonderful thing that has made the world a much smaller place, enabling you to see things on a daily basis you'd have never otherwise known existed. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the car world, and while they're always interesting to see, spotting your dream car for sale in some far away land is also massively frustrating; out of reach for all but the most determined car fanatics.

The aforementioned determination is key to this feature, as this awesome, wide-body, big power Porsche 964 Turbo was found in a way almost all of us will be familiar with; by a friend tagging us in a picture of it on Facebook.

"I was in a pub one evening, which is of course where all great ideas start," says Phil Morrison, the owner of this car. "And someone tagged me in a post about a car at a Japanese auction house. I immediately tried to buy it, but I was too late, the auction had ended." This wasn't simply a drunken impulse attempted buy, though. Phil really wanted this car, and this was the start of a roller-coaster of emotions as it went in and out of his grasp for weeks on end.

"It didn't actually sell at the auction, the reserve wasn't met. So I simply waited for two weeks, expecting it to go back up for sale like most unsold cars do. But apparently a deal was done elsewhere, and it was gone". Thankfully, Phil had a saviour in the form of Scottish expatriate Andy Gray, who runs specialist vehicle exporter Power Vehicles in Japan, who kept an eye out for the car. Unbelievably he spotted it on Yahoo Auctions, the Japanese equivalent to eBay, about a month later.

"The car was now for sale at a dealer, but for considerably more money than it would've sold for at auction. Regardless, I made them a really generous offer. Unfortunately, I didn't hear back from them," says Phil. After yet more chasing and investigative work, it transpired the car had been sold to a Japanese resident. Phil was understandably dejected. But two weeks later the emotion-coaster once again headed skywards, as Andy contacted Phil to say the Japanese buyer was having difficulty coming up with the money, so if he still wanted to buy it, he finally had the chance. And guess what? He did exactly that!

THE START OF AN EPIC JOURNEY

At this point, what practically everyone else does is organise for the car to be loaded on to a ship and sent to the UK. But Phil had other plans. He wanted to collect the car himself!

"The car had two months Shaken (Japan's equivalent of the MoT) left, and I'd already booked a holiday to

Click &



Japan, so I decided to combine the two." Phil explains.

As well as being an all-round car enthusiast, Phil happens to be the director of Driftworks, one of the world's best-known brands for specialist parts and equipment in drifting, and his industry contacts are what helped him track down the car. Power Vehicles are most famous within the drift world, and the negotiation and communication was handled by Arios, a luxury car dealer in Japan, who, quite unusually, uses a modified Ferrari F430 as a drift car (search YouTube for 'Arios Ferrari' and you will find lots of videos).



PORSCHE 964 TURBO

Collect



GT2 Evo-style rear wing



WILD CARD



“Someone tagged me in a post about the car. I immediately tried to buy it, but I was too late...”

Yup. That is one huge custom intercooler

So a plan was hatched: Phil and his wife were to fly to Japan, head to Arios to pick up the car, then drive it over 600 miles through Japan, before finally loading it into a container for the journey to the UK.

Flying to the other side of the world to pick up a highly tuned 26-year-old 911 Turbo you've paid a lot of money for without ever seeing, and then expecting to drive it over 600 miles through foreign countries, is a daring move to say the least. But one that, thankfully, worked out brilliantly.

THE MOMENT OF TRUTH

“When I first saw it I couldn't believe the condition. It is unbelievably clean inside, outside and underneath, and all the work that had been done was like nothing I'd ever seen come out of Japan before. While the planned relaxing holiday turned in to another crazy car adventure, it was one of the best things we've ever done.”

Although the story of the purchase is pretty epic, it's the car this feature is about, and what a stunner it is. Phil isn't someone who is into pure originality and keeping cars wrapped in cotton wool. He loves cars for the performance and enjoyment of driving them, and it's safe to say for people like him (which we'd also guess is most of you readers), this is pretty much the perfect incarnation of a 964 Turbo.

The 3.3ltr flat six has been tuned by Japanese Porsche tuning legends Promodet, and while the exact specification of the engine internals are unknown, going by similar builds of other customers, it's likely a fully balanced and blueprinted engine, with pinned cases, ported heads, uprated valve springs, and long duration RSR-spec cams. The very peaky power delivery certainly hints at that.

The biggest engine modifications however consist of the huge custom intercooler, stunning Promodet exhaust manifold, big HKS T04 turbocharger (significantly larger than the factory K27), and along with uprated fuel and ignition systems. With all of this controlled by the Motec ECU, the engine puts out around 550bhp while revving hard to the 7000rpm rev limiter.

From an engine performance point of view the car is a beast, but the first thing anyone notices is the looks, which are nothing short of stunning.

We're sure almost all of you will have heard of RWB, aka RAUH-Welt BEGRIFF (another Japanese Porsche tuner, world famous for the wild race-style wide arch body conversions for 911s), and Nakai-San, the main man behind RWB, is also responsible for the stunning looks of this car.





WORK Brombacher two-piece alloys with
Michelin Pilot Super Sport tyres

THE WHOLE PACKAGE

One big difference between this car and most RWB conversions you see, is that this one has smooth bodywork. RWB cars are known for having rivet-on, race-style arch extensions, much like many Porsche GT race cars over the decades. But this is a 'smooth fender' conversion, which while still incredibly wide and imposing, gives a slightly more factory look. Combined with the GT2 Evo-style rear wing, stunning WORK Brombacher wheels, and the millimetre perfect ride height and wheel fitment, makes for one of the nicest looking 964s we've ever seen.

It's powerful, it looks incredible, and it's been a wild journey to even bring it to the UK. But how does it actually drive? Well thankfully Phil is more qualified than most to explain how this car feels when pushed hard, as





The 964 sits on 11x18-inch front and 12x18-inch rear WORK Brombacher two piece splits

not only does he own this, but also a RWD converted Lamborghini Murciélago LP640. He has previously owned a 997.2 GT3 and 991 GT3 too, not to mention his other race and drift toys he regularly uses on track. So, what does he think?

"It's probably the laggiest handful of a car I've ever driven, but that's partly why I absolutely love driving it. It's really quite difficult, pretty lethal in some circumstances, but I wouldn't have it any other way," he says.

"There's no boost before about 4000rpm, and because of the long gearing the lag is frustrating as you always require a downshift to go anywhere fast. But that's a big part of the fun and drama of the car, and the noise and power of it when it's on boost is just perfect."

FINAL DESTINATION

So this car is clearly a beast to drive, but many people call modern GT3 Porsches beasts too, so how does this compare to his previous 997.2 and 991 GT3s?

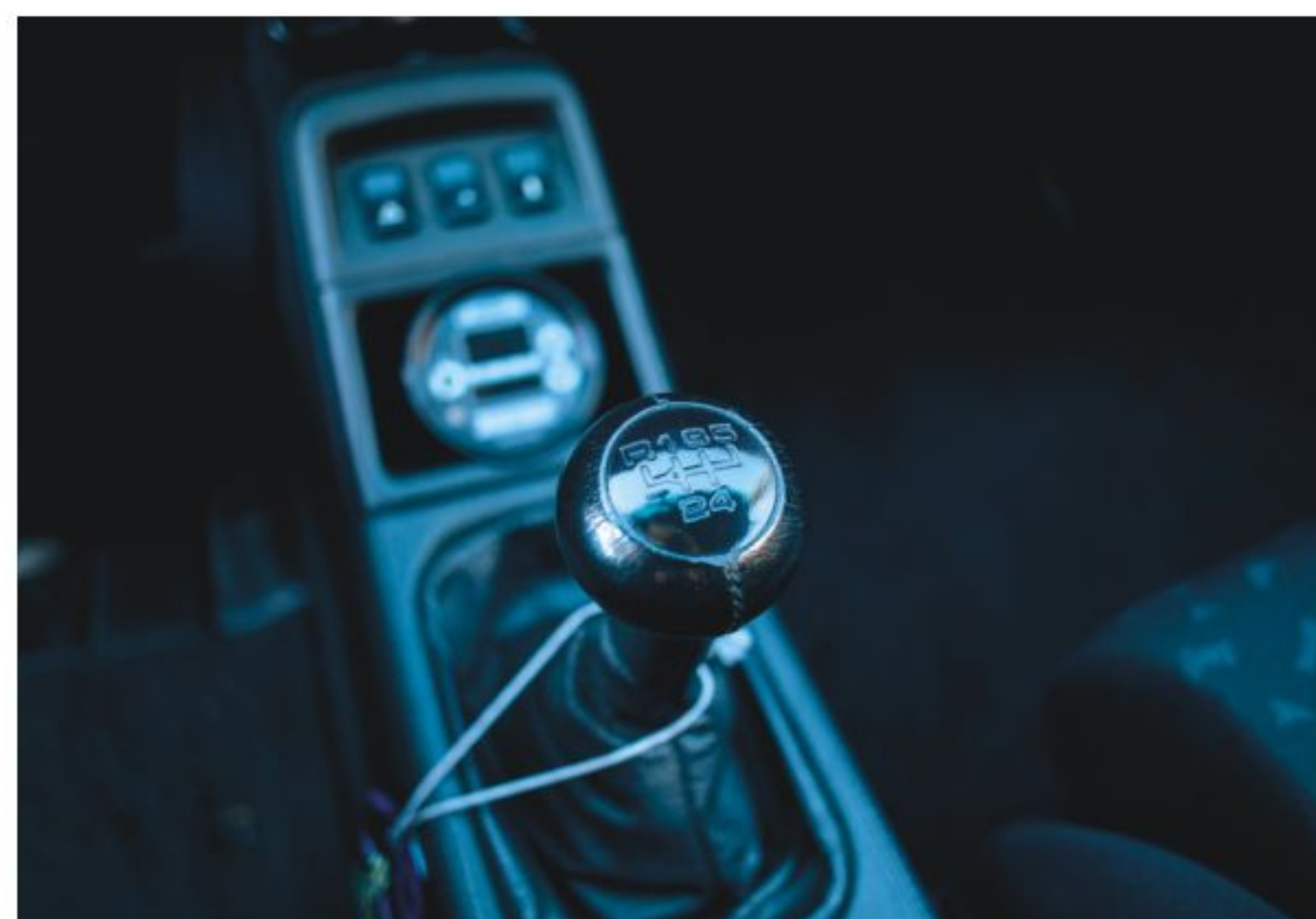
"The GT3s were eye openers for me," says Phil. "Absolutely incredible to drive hard on track, but the 964 is nothing like them at all. It's a comparatively tiny car compared to the newer models, and while literally anyone could jump in a modern GT3 and go fast, this 964 Turbo is truly dangerous and an absolute handful on the limit. Hilarious, but dangerous, and I love it like that. Unlike the GT3s, there's very few people I'd ever trust to drive it."

This car is an amazing build, so does this mean Phil won't change a thing about it? Well, no, not quite. In fact

he's already changed quite a bit! The boost controller, ignition system, and fuel pump wiring were changed once it arrived in the UK to correct some intermittent running issues it had, and purely for his own preference he's changed the tyres to slightly wider Michelin Pilot Super Sports, lowered the ride height a little more, and fitted an uprated gearbox mount.

Plans include getting the car mapped again to see if the lag can be improved upon, creating and fitting a bump steer correction kit, and as Driftworks are the official UK WORK Wheels dealers, he has a new set of the same WORK Brombachers currently fitted to the car arriving shortly, just in a slightly different colour to the ones you see here.

He's not trying to improve on what many tuning fans would see as 964 perfection. He just knows that in the world of modified cars, nothing is truly ever perfect...👉



OWNER PROFILE:

Name: Phil Morrison

Age: 41

Occupation:

Director, Driftworks Ltd

You've got quite a collection, but what's your dream supercar?

I'd love to have had the chance to own a McLaren P1, which is quite a strange choice as I'm not a big fan of any other modern McLarens.

Have you any other cars in the pipeline?

I put a deposit down on a new 991.2 GT3 over three years ago, but there's a long waiting list, so don't hold your breath on that.

TECH SPEC: 1992 PORSCHE 964 TURBO

ENGINE

Promodet-built 3.3ltr flat 6; Promodet custom titanium tubular turbo manifold; HKS T04S turbocharger; HKS GT external wastegate; custom GReddy intercooler; alloy intercooler pipework; turbo oil return tank; Motec M4 ECU; high flow injectors; MSD 6AL-2 CDI ignition; MSD Blaster ignition coil; Turbosmart E-Boost electronic boost controller; twin Bosch 044 fuel pumps; twin custom exhaust systems (one from turbo and one from external wastegate); 7000rpm rev limiter.

POWER

550bhp at 1.2bar boost (estimate).

TRANSMISSION

G50 5 speed gearbox; ORC twin plate clutch; limited slip diff; Powerflex uprated gearbox mount.

SUSPENSION

Endless Zeal coilovers with Swift springs.

BRAKES

Brembo Racing front and rear callipers; two-piece 355mm grooved discs (front); two-piece 330mm grooved discs (rear); Endless pads front and rear.

WHEELS AND TYRES

11x18in front (+31 offset) and 12x18in rear (+18 offset) WORK Brombacher two piece alloy wheels with 265/40x18 (front) and 295/35x18 (rear) Michelin Pilot Super Sport tyres.

EXTERIOR

RWB 'smooth fender' wide body conversion and RWB bumpers; 993 GT2 Evo style bootlid and rear wing, clear side repeaters; front foglamp air ducts.

INTERIOR

Recaro Profi SPG fixed back bucket seats; Nardi Torino steering wheel.

THANKS

Driftworks, www.driftworks.com
Power Vehicles, www.powervehicles.com

PROMODET JAPAN

While not the first name most think of when it comes to Porsche tuning, to the people who have heard of them, Japanese tuner Promodet has an almost legendary reputation for tuning 911s, especially air-cooled versions. From high speed street racers to circuit cars, they have built them all. They are perhaps most famous for building the BlackBird (and replicas since for customers), a tuned 964 Turbo featured heavily in the Manga series Wangan Midnight.

Another reason they're considered so special (thanks to the totally different attitude to car modification in Japan, where individuality is always respected and rarely criticised), is for their more flamboyant and one-off tuning modifications compared to what we are used to seeing on tuned Porsches in Europe. This is especially noticeable with their big turbo conversions that are almost always fully custom made with no two setups ever quite the same. Their website is in Japanese, but it is still worth a look. The URL you'll be needing is: www.promodet.co.jp

Blackbird ③



Recaro Profi SPG fixed-back bucket seats



Nardi Torino steering wheel. An Italian brand that's synonymous with Japanese car culture

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READERS' RIDES

Photos by Josh Chapple (@driftriderjosh)



CHARLIE STRATFORD-EVANS' VW PASSAT

FC says: Owning a super-swag wagon is not only fantastic for scene points, but also comes with some amazing practical bonuses too, as Charlie here has found with his slammed B4 Passat.

"I made up some floral curtains for the rear windows, so I can throw an air bed in the back and sleep in it at shows!"

Don't think for a second this big-booted build hasn't been taken seriously, however. Dig into the spec of this TDI-badged Dub and you'll soon discover it's an out-and-out show stopper in its own right.

Let's start with that candy red bodywork. Charlie wasted no time when snapping up the car around a year ago by stripping the thing down, smoothing

out the shell and giving it all a full re-spray in its original gleaming hue. It's now sporting the likes of a Polo GTI front splitter, BMW side skirts and a discreet spoiler out back to add even more of an edge.

The VW was then dropped down on some coilovers and now sits on some tasty contrasting Rota alloys, giving it a mean static stance. Inside, a wooden steering wheel and gearknob combo add even more class to proceedings (and match those aforementioned curtains nicely).

Now pondering about air suspension systems, hybrid turbos and front-mount intercoolers, we feel like this build is only set to get even greater in the future!



Main mods:

Full re-spray in original candy pearl red; smoothed body; universal roof-mounted rear spoiler; BMW M Performance side skirts; Polo GTI front splitter; red-tinted rear lights; tinted headlight covers; straight-through exhaust system; PD130 inlet manifold; larger fuel injectors; TA Technix coilovers; bronze Rota Grid alloys; MOMO wooden steering wheel; handmade wooden gearknob; SEAT Cupra half-leather seats; and those custom floral curtains.

SHOW US WHAT YOU'VE GOT!

Here's your chance to show off both your ride and your photography skills in the pages of FC. To enter your car just open a fresh new email, put 'Readers' Rides Submission' in the subject line and send us a few pics of the best bits (larger than 1MB with no ghosting or logos, and you must have the photographer's permission) along with a short spec and a paragraph telling us why your motor deserves to adorn these hallowed pages. Ping the whole lot over to jules.truss@kelsey.co.uk and we'll do the rest.



READERS' RIDES



Loving the retro-race vibe

➔ NATHAN PEPLER'S **NISSAN MICRA**

FC says: Sometimes the most unusual cars turn out to be the most awesome – something that certainly rings true with Nathan's seriously thrash-able looking Nissan Micra here!

Developed up from a daily driver to this impressive fast-road/track-day spec over the course of a couple of years, this humble little 1.3-litre hatch has evolved to boast some seriously impressive performance parts that ensure it's punching well above its weight in terms of capabilities now.

Highlights for us include those dinky JDM alloys on each corner, shod in a healthy dose of chunky rubber courtesy of Nankang and giving the car that epic retro-racer vibe in the

process. The hatch is also dropped on some premium BC Racing coilovers and treated to a Nodspeed Panhard rod to keep it fully in-check on the twisties.

Boasting its original 1.3-litre normally-aspirated motor, it's the task of a Toyota Glanza inlet manifold and a striking Gizfab exhaust manifold to squeeze as much performance out of the screaming lump as physically possible.

Inside, the semi-race car vibe continues with a fully-stripped interior and some sturdy Recaro bucket seats designed to hold both driver and passenger in place when things get especially fruity.



We can only imagine how many embarrassed faces in much more expensive metal this Micra has created over the years!

Main mods:

Glanza inlet manifold; Gizfab 4-2-1 manifold; custom exhaust system; Ramair air filter; NISTune ECU; Civic aluminium radiator; fully stripped; Recaro bucket seats with OMP harnesses; Sparco steering wheel with OMP boss kit; Nismo rear wing; BC Racing coilovers; WORK and Wedsport alloys; Nankang semi-slick tyres; Pulsar GTi-R brakes; Nodspeed Panhard rod.



A Powerflow exhaust system helps unlock some potential



Check out more pictures of the Swift on Stephen's Insta (@s.austwick_photography)

STEPHEN AUSTWICK'S **SUZUKI SWIFT**

FC says: When it was time for Stephen here to snap up his next car around four years ago, his strict brief meant it was a rather difficult choice to nail. He was after something that was not only frugal and practical for his day-to-day activities, but also a little bit of fun on the weekends too, especially when some light tuning work was thrown into the mix. But in the end, one car stood out amongst all the others: the humble SZ3 Suzuki Swift!

"It's my pride and joy. It's regularly detailed and I carry out all the maintenance work," he smiles as he shows us his silver example of this celebrated hatch. "It's a cracking everyday car with the mods I've added to it."

The mods in question revolve around the likes of a Pipercross air filter and Powerflow exhaust system to unlock more from that surprisingly capable 1.3-litre motor, as well as AP coilovers and EBC brake upgrades to ensure the handling and stopping are nothing but bang-on.

Inside, a comprehensive sound system ensures that driving the little ripper isn't the only great thing about being in the hot seat behind the wheel.

Main mods:

AP coilovers; EBC pads and discs; Ferodo rear shoes; Pipercross air filter; Powerflow exhaust; Fox Racing alloys; Pioneer headunit; Kenwood sub; JVC speakers; Dynamat doorcards.

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ARSE END

Quotes of the Month:



Jules: "Big enough poster of Brewer? He's big in the USA you know!"

Midge: "He's big everywhere, the loveable chubby chap."

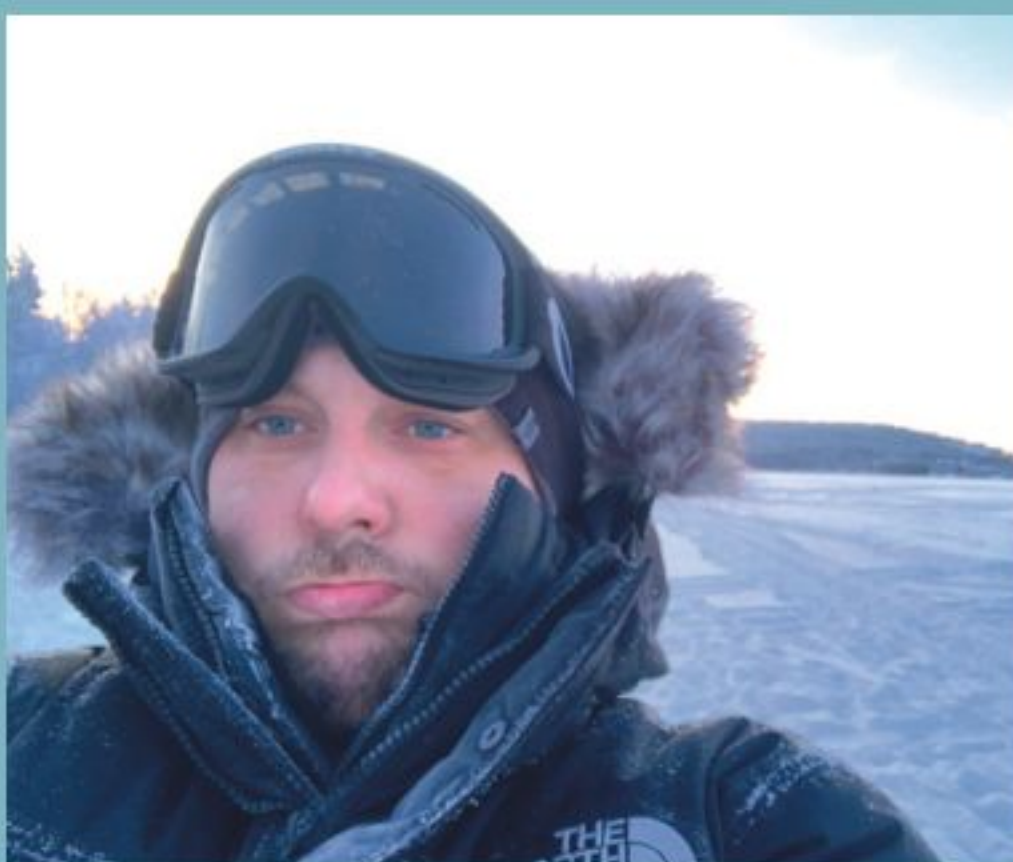


Midge: "Turkey dinosaurs for dinner, fuck yeah!"

Glenda: "You've got issues, you know that, right?"

Midge: "Sorry I forgot about the vegan thing."

Glenda: "It's nothing to do with that. What are you, five?"



Jules: "Blimey, it's definitely snowing more in Dartford than it is here then."

Midge: "I'm in Finland, you tit."

Jules: "Oh, that doesn't constitute 'working from home' you know. Get your arse back here!"



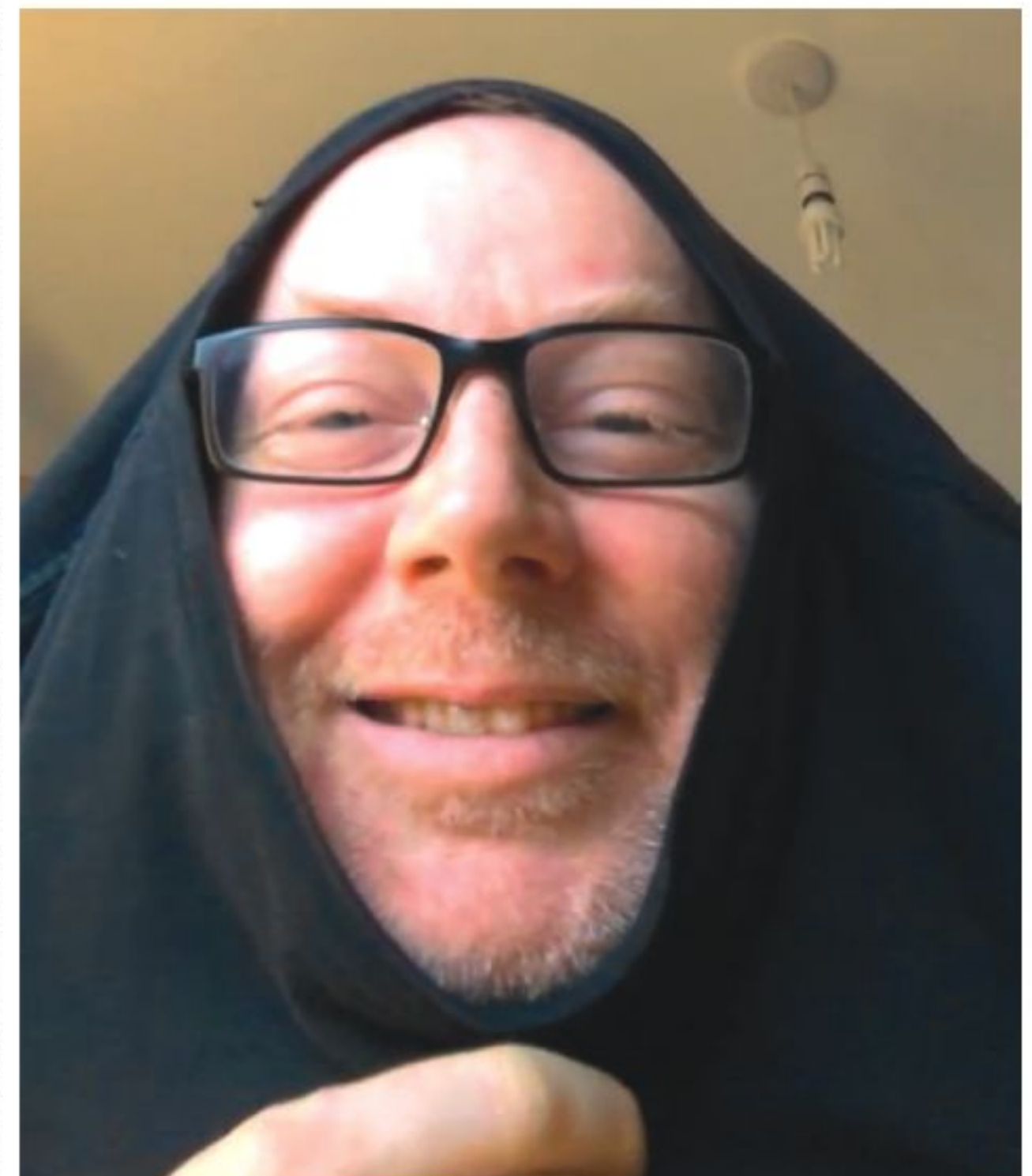
Small One

What's ET short for? Because he's got little legs, of course. And he's obviously not the only one. Yep, we have been known to use the odd 'special effect' in FC before, but not this time – those are Midge's actual legs! We swear he's shrinking in his old age. If there ever was a time to stop wearing your jeans like a teenager, son, it's now.



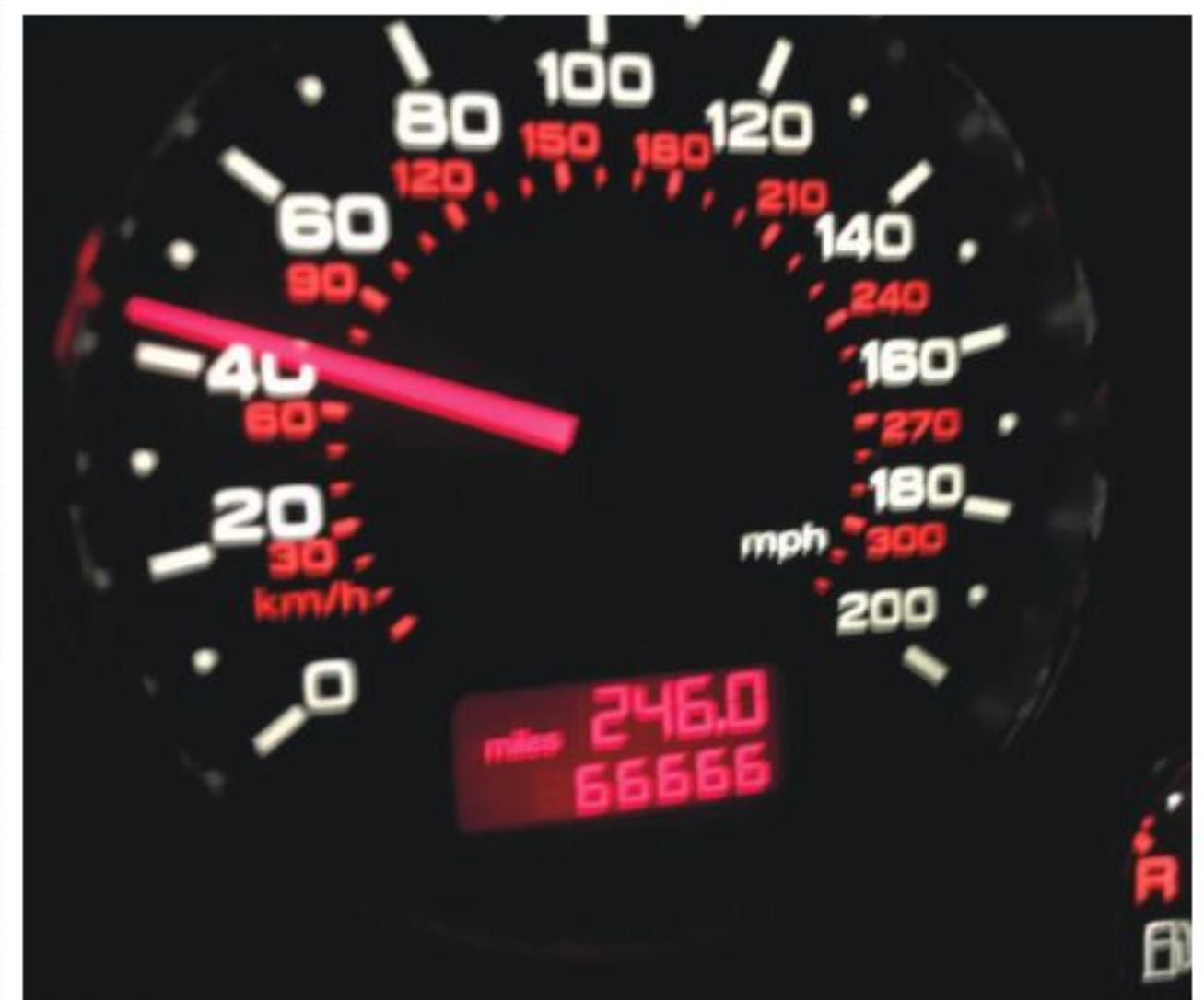
Not Fat – Big Boned

If there's one thing we've always wondered about our Jules it's who most inspires him in life. Now we think about it though, it's all pretty obvious...



Bless you Sister

We're not sure if our G has taken a vow of chastity, he's just cold because he's getting on a bit (or a lot – Jules), or if he's about to break out in song like some sort of cheap Whoopi Goldberg impersonator. One thing's for certain though he's, ahem, definitely back in the habit... the habit being cross dressing as a nun. Remember kids, we all go a bit peculiar in the end!



Number of The Beast

Our Glenda's always banging on about how his RS4 is a bit of a beast and judging by this pic he's not wrong. Then again, his Audi could just be pissed off that he only puts in four quid's worth of petrol at any one time, to help save all the furry little creatures he's not allowed to eat. Yep, we're sure that's it...



TOP 5 VIDEOS

CHECK OUT MORE @ WWW.FASTCAR.CO.UK



PLAYERS TRUCK

Sometimes, you just can't beat a good old truck. So, here's one of the best from our mate JayMac – his awesome bagged 1950 Ford F150.
www.fastcar.co.uk/videos/1950-ford-f1-on-air-ride



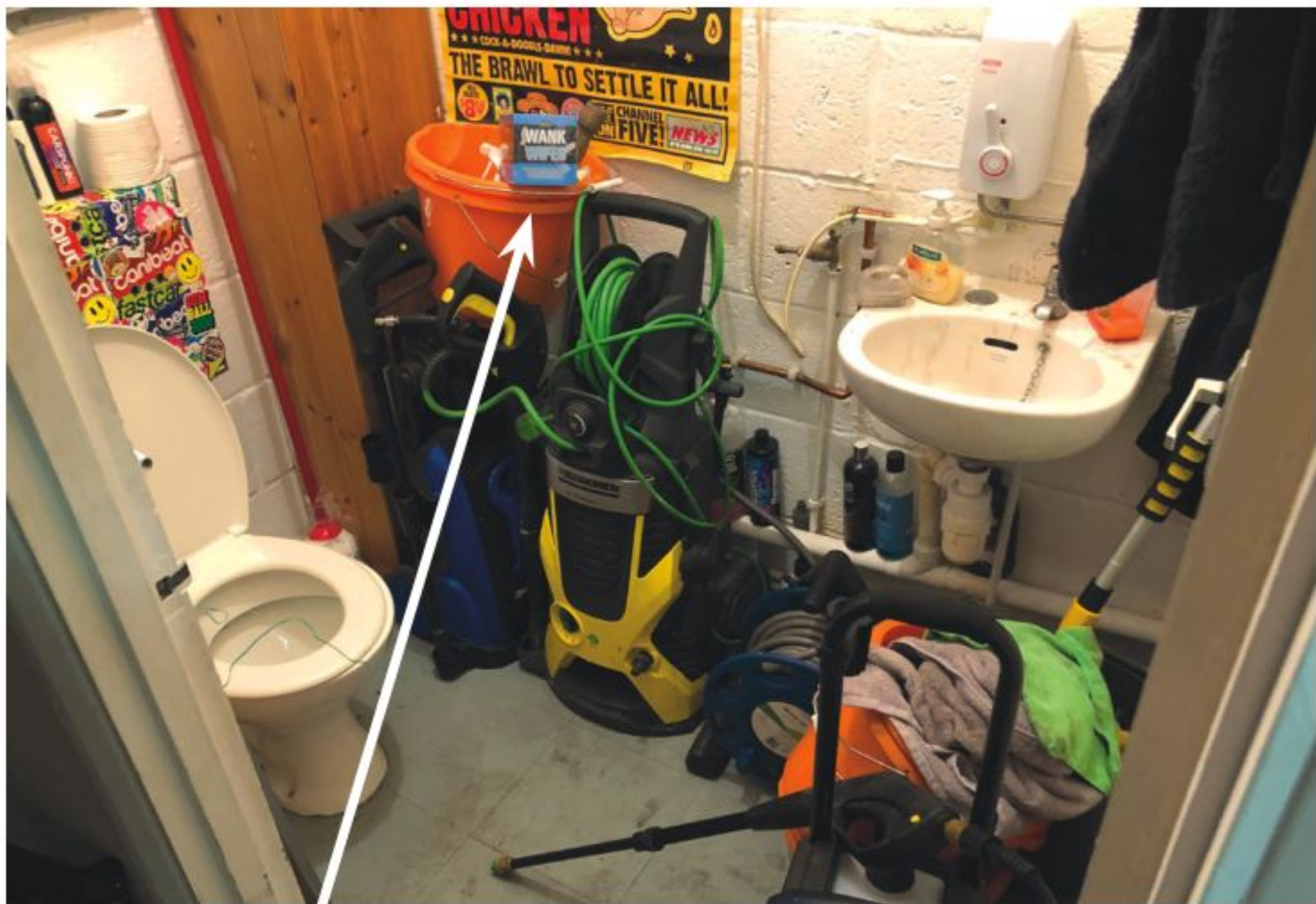
LITCHFIELD TRACK EDITION GT-R

Fancy buying yourself a Nissan GT-R? Of course you do. But you don't want a stock one though, do you? Nope. So check out this absolute beast from Litchfield.
www.fastcar.co.uk/car-review/litchfield-nissan-gt-r-track-edition-review



TAS 2019

We've got a cracking report from the Tokyo Auto Salon over on page 71, but here's one from our friends at Toyo Tires. One where the pictures move. Technology eh?
www.fastcar.co.uk/videos/tokyo-auto-salon-2019



Top Bog

Yep, there's only one man who could have nine buckets and three pressure washers in his bathroom – and clearly that lot is just for sorting out the almighty skidmarks (only when Jules visits – Midge). Still, that's not the most worrying thing we saw when we dropped into our little kleptomaniac's workshop this month. No wonder he spends so much bloody time down there!



Celebrity Readers

We're always most chuffed to meet a TV legend, especially when it's one of our all-time great childhood heroes. That said, either Morph is shrinking pretty rapidly nowadays, or our Midge is actually growing. We're guessing it's the former.



YOKOHAMA HOT RODS
Here's some more craziness from Japan, this time from Yokohama and their Hot Rod Custom Show. Looks like the Yanks aren't the only ones who do these so well!
www.fastcar.co.uk/videos/yokohama-hot-rod-custom-show-2018



BURNOUT WORLD CHAP
Those Aussies just love a burnout... and so do we! Here's a world champ and his 1000hp Mustang going at it at the mega Summerlats show. Epic!
www.fastcar.co.uk/videos/1000bhp-burnout-champion-crowned

BLAST FROM THE PAST

ISSUE 353 – APRIL 2015

Four years and 53 issues ago...

- Mark Fisher's Lambo-wheeled Edition 30 was a right little stunner. It was also the last time Midge wrote a decent car feature (oi! – Midge).
- Autosport was a right stormer in 2015... it wasn't half bad this year either.
- You certainly don't see a tasty tight ass like that every day... You gotta love a Mk6 Fiesta.
- We just loved Matty MacDonald's E92, especially with all that audio and lrr Bru in the boot. MacGenius!
- We went all the way to Essen to look at cars. Yes, cars. That's definitely what it was.
- Speaking of lairy E92s, Jules started on his very own monster this month. Midge remembers going all the way to Birmingham to check it over, fondly. Not!
- We've seen more than a couple of Liberty Walk GT-Rs over the past few years. But here's the original, owned by Kato-san himself. A piece of history that.
- Muscle, proper American muscle... there's no other way to describe this 150-grand 1966 Chevelle.



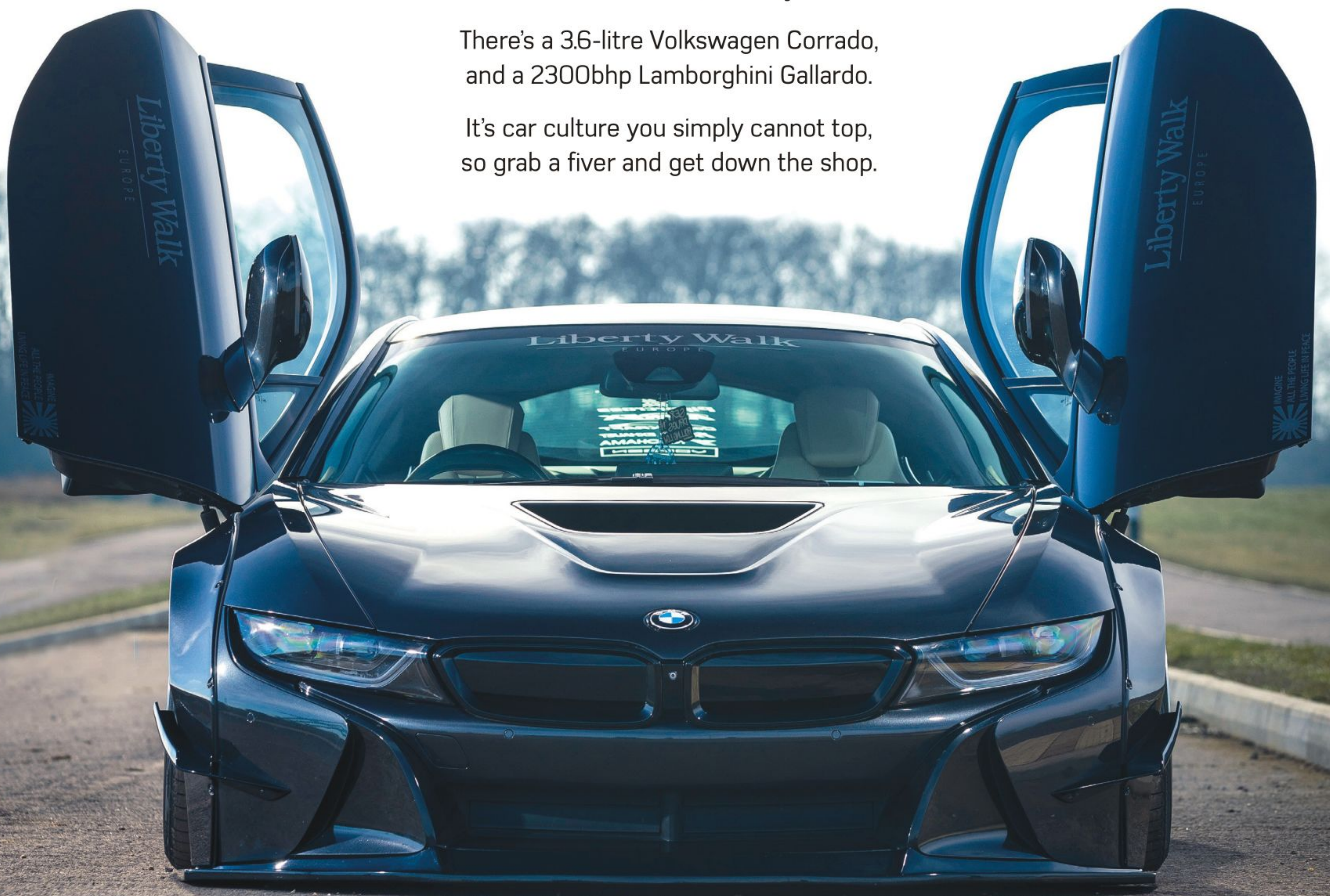
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The next issue of Fast Car will be great,
we feature the UK's first Liberty Walk i8.

There's a 3.6-litre Volkswagen Corrado,
and a 2300bhp Lamborghini Gallardo.

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